Chinese Faces

The Sociopsychology of Facial Features as Described in «The Story of the Stone»

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The present paper explores different ways in which facial features are conceived of as being expressive of character and personality, emotions and mental states. It is concerned with the face as a concrete physical object, not as the abstract social concept implied in expressions like "lose face" or "save face". It attempts to investigate how this physical object is assumed to signal something beyond the mere physiology of the facial features involved.

The corpus investigated is the 18th-century Chinese novel *The Story of the Stone* 《石頭記》, also known as *The Red Chamber Dream* 《紅樓夢》.[1] This is arguably the greatest novel in Chinese literary history. It is also a long one, its most famous English translation covering five volumes of more than 500 pages each. The author of the first 80 chapters is Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹 (?1715-?1763), while the last 40 chapters as we now know them were almost certainly written by somebody else, maybe Gao E 高鶚 (?1740-?1815).

The paper consists of three parts. The first part is concerned with ethno-physiology. It tries to show how parallel lines in Chinese prose

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[1] The present study is based on a computerised text available at the following web site:

http://cls.admin.yzu.edu.tw/HLM/home.htm

This text usually follows the handwritten manuscript called the 1760 edition 庚辰本 for the first 80 chapters and the printed 1791 edition 程甲本 for the last 40 chapters, but with many so-called corrections partly based on other early manuscripts. The computerised version is generally reliable, except for some mistakes due to conversion from simplified to traditional characters. This material has been supplemented with material from a computerised text located at:

ifcss.org:/china-studies/xiaoyu-collection/novel/classical

The first 80 chapters of this text are based on the handwritten Dream Manuscript edition 夢稿本, though chapters 25-30, 61-65, and 76-79 are missing (as are chapters 81-84 from the latter part), and the text has many misprints. In many cases, several early handwritten and blockprinted manuscripts have been consulted (cf. bibliography). My translations often borrow heavily from Hawkes and Minford's translation *The Story of the Stone* and from Yang and Yang's translation *A Dream of Red Mansions*.

reveal a specifically Chinese way of categorising the various parts of the face. The second part looks into questions of ethno-physiognomy. To what extent is a person's facial appearance conceived of as an expression of his or her character? The third part discusses the ethno-psychology of the face. It shows the various ways in which changes of colour, emission of fluids, and muscular activity are conceived of as direct expressions of emotions or mental states. These three parts are followed by concluding remarks relating some of the findings to what we already know about Western conceptions of the face.

The Physiology of the Chinese Face

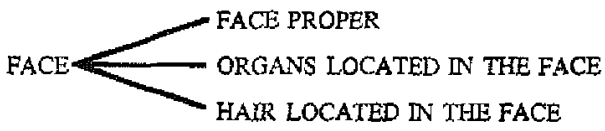
The Chinese terms *liǎn* 臉 and *miàn* 面, like the English term *face,* refer to the front part of the head, with the ears (*ěr* 耳), the hair at the temples (*bìn* 鬢) and, less often, the hair on the head (*fà* 髮) constituting a grey zone between the face and the rest of the head.

How does culture influence one's way of perceiving the face? This part of the paper attempts to give one answer. In short, it influences one's *categorisation* of the various parts of the face. Sometimes this happens in surprising ways that are extremely difficult to detect.

There are many possible ways of categorising face parts. For instance, one might choose a system of categorisation based on *vicinity.* In such a system, eyes and brows would belong more closely together than eyes and mouth, brows and forehead would belong more closely together than brows and beard, and ears and temple hair would belong more closely together than ears and eyes. I am not sure whether this principle is adhered to in any systematic manner in any part of the world. However, it does seem to be at work in Chinese compounds like *yǎnméi* 眼眉 'eyes and brows; appearance', *méi'é* 眉額 'brows and forehead', and *ěrbìn* 耳鬢 'ears and temple hair'.

The system of categorisation that I shall be concerned with here, however, is not based on vicinity, but on function. The system itself is quite simple and will hardly surprise anybody. What is surprising is the extreme consistency in the application of this system in certain types of Chinese prose.

The system consists of a division of the face into three types of face parts:



The face proper covers the skin at the front part of the head, including the forehead, the cheeks, and the chin. The organs located in the face include the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and the ears. Hair located in the face covers eyebrows, beard, temple hair, and (possibly) the hair on the head. Henceforth this categorisation will be referred to as the *Tripartite Division of the Face.*

The following list includes facial terms found in *The Story of the Stone* and classified according to the Tripartite Division of the Face:[2]

A. The face proper

liǎn 臉, *liǎnr* 臉兒, *miàn* 面, *miànr* 面兒, *miànpáng* 面龐, *liǎnmiàn* 臉面 'face'
liǎnpí 臉皮, *miànpí* 面皮 'face skin'

é 額, *élú* 額顱 'forehead'

jiá 頰, *quán* 顴, *sāi* 腮, *sāibāngzi* 腮幫子 (some editions only), *sāijiá* 腮頰, *jiásāi* 頰腮 'cheek'

[2] Only terms referring to physical face parts have been included. For instance, many terms ending in the suffix *-zi* 子 are only used in transferred meanings and do not belong here, e.g. *liǎnzi* 臉子 (as in *gěi liǎnzi qiáo* 給臉子瞧 lit. 'give sb. a face to see' ch. 31, and *shuāi liǎnzi* 摔臉子 lit. 'throw face' ch. 9, 83, both meaning 'showing sb. one's strong discontent'), *yǎnpízi* 眼皮子 (as in *yǎnpízi qiǎn* 眼皮子淺 lit. 'having shallow eyelids', i.e. 'greedy' ch. 52), *kǒuzi* 口子 (as in *liǎng kǒuzi* lit. 'two mouths', i.e. 'married couple' ch. 27, 29, 44, 46 etc.), *zuǐzi* 嘴子 lit. 'mouth', i.e. 'tip' ch. 68, *yázi* 牙子 lit. 'tooth', i.e. 'trader in human beings' ch. 40, 46, 80. Many compounds are also always or mostly used in transferred meanings, e.g. *chúnshé* 唇舌 lit. 'lips and tongue', i.e. 'talking', *kǒushé* 口舌 lit. 'mouth and tongue' and *kǒuchǐ* 口齒 lit. 'mouth and teeth', both meaning 'gossip', *xūméi* 鬚眉 lit. 'beard and brows', i.e. 'man; male person', *ěrmù* 耳目 lit. 'ears and eyes', i.e. 'spy'.

rénzhōng 人中 'the vertical groove on the median line of the upper lip; philtrum'

yè 靨 'dimple'

xiàba 下巴 'chin; lower jaw'

B. Organs located in the face

yǎn 眼, *yǎnr* 眼兒, *yǎnjīng* 眼睛, *mù* 目 'eye'
yǎnzhūzi 眼珠子 (some editions only), *yǎnzhūr* 眼珠兒, *yǎnjīngzhūr* 眼睛珠兒, *jīng* 睛 'eyeball'
yǎnpí 眼皮 (some editions only), *yǎnpír* 眼皮兒 'eyelid'
yǎnpāo 眼泡 'upper eyelid'
yǎnquān 眼圈 (some editions only), *yǎnquānr* 眼圈兒, *yǎnjīngquānr* 眼睛圈兒 'eye socket, rim of the eye'
yǎnjiǎo 眼角 'corner of the eye'
móu 眸 'pupil'

bí 鼻, *bízi* 鼻子 'nose'
bíkǒng 鼻孔, *bíziyǎn* 鼻子眼, *bíziyǎnr* 鼻子眼兒 'nostril'
bíchì 鼻翅 'alea of the nose'

kǒu 口, *kǒur* 口兒, *zuǐ* 嘴, *zuǐr* 嘴兒 'mouth'
kǒujiǎo 口角 'corner of the mouth'
chún 唇 (some editions also 脣), *zuǐchún* 嘴唇, *zuǐchúnr* 嘴唇兒 'lip'
shé 舌, *shér* 舌兒 (some editions only), *shézi* 舌子 (some editions only), *shétou* 舌頭, *shétour* 舌頭兒 'tongue'
shégēn 舌根 'root of the tongue'
yá 牙, *yár* 牙兒, *yǎchǐ* 牙齒, *chǐ* 齒 'tooth'
yágēn 牙根 'root of a tooth'

ěr 耳, *ěrduo* 耳朵 'ear'
ěrgēn 耳根 'root of the ear'

C. Hair located in the face

méi 眉, *méir* 眉兒 (some editions only) 'eyebrow'
méitóu 眉頭 (some editions only), *méitóur* 眉頭兒, *méijiān* 眉尖 'inner part of the eyebrow'
méishāo 眉梢 'tip of the eyebrow'
méixīn 眉心 'area between the eyebrows'
méi'é 眉額 'eyebrows and the surrounding area'

hú 鬍 (some editions only), *húzi* 鬍子, *húxū* 鬍鬚, *xū* 鬚, *xūzi* 鬚子 (some editions only), *rán* 髯 'beard'

bìn 鬢, *bìnfà* 鬢髮, *bìnmáo* 鬢毛, *bìnjiǎo* 鬢角 'hair at the temples'

fà 髮, *tóufa* 頭髮 'hair on the head'
fàdǐng 髮頂 'the part of the hair that is closest to the skin of the head'

While this categorisation is plausible enough, I know of no explicit mention of it either in Chinese works of literature or in Chinese works on physiognomy. It is highly surprising, therefore, to find that the Tripartite Division of the Face is consistently, though always implicitly, present in descriptions of facial appearance and facial expressions throughout the novel under investigation, *The Story of the Stone.*

Considering the sheer size of this novel and the fact that it was written by at least two different authors, this is a remarkable fact. The Tripartite Division of the Face underlies descriptions of facial appearance and facial expressions in parts of the novel written by both authors. The use of this categorisation, therefore, is not just the whim of one single author, but seems to have some greater cultural significance.

The Tripartite Division of the Face mainly shows up in passages that describe facial *appearance* or *expressions* of characters in the novel. Such passages typically take the form of parallel couplets written in literary or semi-literary Chinese, as in the following example:[3]

[3] This verselike description is found in different versions in the various early

(1) 兩 彎 似 蹙 非 蹙 籠 煙 眉
liǎng wān sì cù fēi cù lǒng yān méi
two bows as-if frown not frown envelop smoke brows

一 雙 似 喜 非 喜 含 情 目
one pair as-if happy not happy contain feelings eyes

'mist-wreathed brows that seemed to frown, yet were not frowning and passionate eyes that seemed to smile, yet were not smiling' (ch. 3)

Each word in the first line of this couplet is syntactically and semantically parallel to the corresponding word in the second line. Most significant in our context, a face term in the first line (*méi* 眉 'brows') is parallel to a face term in the second line (*mù* 目 'eyes').

Parallellism does not only imply similarity, but also contrast. Except for *sì* 似 'as if' and *fēi* 非 'not', which are simply repeated, all parallel terms in this passage are in a certain degree of contrast. The degree of contrast varies from the contrast in pronunciation between the near-synonyms *lǒng* 籠 'envelop' and *hán* 含 'contain' to the contrast in meaning between the near-antonyms *cù* 蹙 'frown' and *xǐ* 喜 'be happy'. The use of contrasting terms partly serves to avoid simple repetition, but also functions to make the parallel terms together constitute as wide a variety within the semantic field in question as possible. Generally, parallel lines follow what will be called the *Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Terms:*

> In parallel constructions, contingent terms should be in as sharp contrast as possible.[4]

manuscripts of the novel, the version here appearing in the 1754 edition 甲戌本. In all the versions, *méi* 眉 'eyebrows' is parallel to either *mù* 目 'eyes' or *yǎn* 眼 'eyes'.

[4] Most scholars describe the requirement for contrast in much vaguer terms: "matching words should belong to the same [semantic] category, but they should differ in meaning" (Frankel 1976:147). In the case of simple repetition, however, there is no difference in meaning, but one may still argue — as I do in the case of *sì* ... *fēi* ... 似…非… — that it represents "as sharp contrast as possible".

This principle is not broken by the simple repetition of the pattern *sì* V_1 *fēi* V_1 似V_1非V_1 'as if V_1 yet not V_1', since there exists no parallel pattern with which it might be plausibly contrasted, hence the maximum degree of contrast is zero. To what extent two terms are "in as sharp contrast as possible" is a question of subjective judgement. When it comes to face terms in descriptions of appearance and expression, however, it turns out that the authors of *The Story of the Stone* have practiced the Principle of Maxiumum Contrast between Parallel Terms in a strict way that builds on the Tripartite Division of the Face:

> In parallel constructions describing facial appearance or facial expression, contingent face terms should be taken from different categories in the Tripartite Division of the Face.

For instance, *méi* 眉 'brows' and *mù* 目 'eyes' in the example above are taken from different categories, since *méi* 眉 refers to hair located in the face, while *mù* 目 refers to organs located in the face. This principle will be called the *Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms*.

The term "parallel construction" may refer to a typical couplet like (1) or it may refer to a simple line with internal parallellism:

(2) 眉 清 目 秀
méi *qīng* *mù* *xiù*
brows clear eyes delicate
'a clear and delicate face' (ch. 7)

Since it only consists of four characters (the usual pattern of fixed expressions in semi-literary Chinese, probably deriving from the meter of the *Book of Songs* 詩經), (2) should be considered as one line rather than two. Still, it should be considered as a parallel construction, and it does obey the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms.

The following parallel terms found in descriptions of facial appearance or facial expression in *The Story of the Stone* all adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms:[5]

liǎn 臉 'face' + *yǎn* 眼 'eye[s]':
liǎn ruò yínpán, yǎn rú shuǐxìng 臉若銀盆，眼如水杏 'a face like a silver plate and eyes like water apricots' (ch. 8)
liǎn 臉 'face' + *zuǐ* 嘴 'mouth':
liǎn shàng zuǐ lǐ 臉上嘴裡 'on the face and in the mouth' (ch. 104)
liǎn 臉 'face' + *ěr* 耳 'ear[s]':
liǎn hóng ěr chì 臉紅耳赤 'red face and red ears' (ch. 19)
liǎn 臉 'face' + *xū* 鬚 'beard':
huáng liǎn hóng xū 黃臉紅鬚 'yellow face and red beard' (ch. 102)
liǎn 臉 'face' + *fà* 髮 'hair':
qīng liǎn hóng fà 青臉紅髮 'green face and red hair' (ch. 39)
miàn 面 'face' + *yǎn* 眼 'eye[s]':
miàn rú mǎn yuè yòu bái, yǎn rú qiūshuǐ hái qīng 面如滿月猶白，眼如秋水還清 'a face even whiter than the full moon, and eyes even clearer than autumn waters' (ch. 63)
miàn 面 'face' + *mù* 目 'eye[s]' (5 expressions):
miàn mù qīngxiù 面目清秀 'face and eyes clear and delicate' (ch. 6)
miàn rú měi yù, mù sì míng xīng 面如美玉，目似明星 'face like a beautiful jade, eyes like clear stars' (ch. 15)
miàn ruò chūnhuā, mù rú diǎn qī 面若春花，目如點漆 'face like a spring flower, eyes as were they lacquered' (ch. 15)
miàn mù chuán qíng 面目傳情 'face and eyes conveyed his feelings' (ch. 64)
miàn mù gǎi sè 面目改色 'face and eyes changed colour [i.e. grew pale]' (ch. 96)
miàn 面 'face' + *kǒu* 口 'mouth':
miàn kuò kǒu fāng 面闊口方 'face broad and mouth rectangular' (ch. 1)

[5] Not included are cases in which a face term is parallel to a body term, e.g. *huáng fà chì shēn* 黃髮赤身 'yellow hair and red body' (about a blonde girl with white skin, ch. 52), *liǎn hóng xīn rè* 臉紅心熱 lit. 'red face and hot heart', i.e. 'upset' (ch. 82).

miàn 面 'face' + *chún* 唇 'lip[s]' (4 expressions):

fěnmiàn hán chūn wēi bú lòu, dānchún wèi qǐ xiào xiān wén 粉面含春威不露，丹唇未啟笑先聞 'since her powdered face had the charm of springtime, her awe-inspiring power did not reveal itself; before her crimson lips had even parted, her laughter was already audible' (ch. 3)

miàn rú fù fěn, chún ruò shī zhī 面如傅粉，唇若施脂 (some editions have *fū* 敷 instead of *fù* 傅] '[his] face [looked as fair] as if powdered, his lips [red] as if covered by rouge' (ch. 3)

fěn miàn zhū chún 粉面朱唇 'fair face and red lips' (ch. 7)

miàn rú fù fěn, chún ruò tú zhū 面如傅粉，唇若塗朱 (some editions have 硃 instead of 朱) '[his] face [looked as fair] as if powdered, his lips [red] as if covered by rouge' (ch. 93)

miàn 面 'face' + *ěr* 耳 'ear[s]' (2 expressions):

miàn hóng ěr chì 面紅耳赤 'face red and ears red' (ch. 71)

miàn hóng ěr rè 面紅耳熱 'face red and ears warm' (ch. 109)

miàn 面 'face' + *yá* 牙 'tooth/teeth':

qīng miàn liáo yá 青面獠牙 'green face and long teeth' (ch. 81)

miàn 面 'face' + *fà* 髮 'hair' (2 expressions):

miàn hóng fà luàn 面紅髮亂 'face red and hair dishevelled' (ch. 57)

qīng miàn bái fà 青面白髮 'green face and white hair' (ch. 25)

liǎnmiàn 臉面 'face' + *tóufa* 頭髮 'hair':

yādàn liǎnmiàn, wūyóu tóufa 鴨蛋臉面，烏油頭髮 'face [as round as] a duck's egg and hair [as black as] black oil' (ch. 46)

é 額 'forehead' + *rán* 髯 'beard':

kě é cháng rán 磕額長髯 'protruding forehead and long beard' (ch. 93)

jiá 頰 'cheek[s]' + *móu* 眸 'pupil':

liǎng jiá wēi hóng, shuāng móu dài sè 兩頰微紅，雙眸帶澀 'two cheeks slightly red, two eyes [lit. pupils] somewhat dry' (ch. 100)

sāi 腮 'cheek[s]' + *bí* 鼻 'nose':

腮凝新荔，鼻膩鵝脂 'cheeks clad with fresh lychees [i.e. firm and fresh] and a nose smeared with goose-fat [i.e. white and shiny]' (ch. 3)

sāi 腮 'cheek[s]' + *ěr* 耳 'ear[s]':

dài sāi lián ěr 帶腮連耳 'both cheeks and ears' (ch. 23)

yè 靨 'dimple[s]' + *chún* 唇 'lip[s]':

yè xiào chūntáo xī, yún duī cuì jì; chún zhàn yīngkē xī, liǔ chǐ hán xiāng 靨笑春桃兮，雲堆翠髻；唇綻櫻顆兮，榴齒含香 'her dimples were laughing like the peach-trees of spring, while clouds peeled up in her emerald bun; her lips split apart like small cherries, while her teeth like pomegranate seeds contained a fragrance' (ch. 5)

yǎn 眼 'eye[s]' + *miàn* 面 'face':

yǎn hóng miàn qīng 眼紅面青 'eyes red and face green' (ch. 60 Royal Household edition 王府本 and 1784 edition 甲辰本)

yǎn 眼 'eye[s]' + *sāi* 腮 'cheek[s]' (2 expressions):

yǎn zhǒng sāi hóng 眼腫腮紅 'eyes swollen and cheeks red' (ch. 107)

xīngyǎn wēi xíng, xiāngsāi dài chì 星眼微餳，香腮帶赤 'starry eyes were a little drowsy, fragrant cheeks turned slightly red' (ch. 26)

yǎn 眼 'eye[s]' + *méi* 眉 'brow[s]' (2 expressions):

jùn yǎn xiū méi 俊眼修眉 'pretty eyes and well-trimmed eyebrows' (ch. 3)

yì shuāng dānfèng sānjiǎo yǎn, liǎng wān liǔyè diàoshāo méi 一雙丹鳳三角眼，兩彎柳葉吊梢眉 'a pair of almond-shaped [lit. triangular] eyes like a red-headed phoenix, two bows of eyebrows with hanging tips like willow-leaves' (ch. 3)

yǎnjīng 眼睛 'eye[s]' + *liǎng quán* 兩顴 'two cheeks':

yǎnjīng zhíshù, liǎng quán xiānhóng 眼睛直豎，兩顴鮮紅 'eyes standing and cheeks fresh red' (ch. 87)

yǎnquān 眼圈 'rim of the eye[s]' + *shuāng sāi* 雙腮 'two cheeks':

yǎnquān wēi hóng, shuāng sāi dài chì 眼圈微紅，雙腮帶赤 'the rim of the eyes slightly red, and the two cheeks a little red' (ch. 34)

bí 鼻 'nose' + *sāi* 腮 'cheek[s]':

zhí bí quán sāi 直鼻權腮 'straight nose and balanced cheeks' (ch. 1)

chún 唇 'lip[s]' + *méi* 眉 'brow[s]':

chún bù diǎn ér hóng, méi bú huà ér cuì 唇不點而紅，眉不畫而翠 'lips red without make-up, brows emerald without paint' (ch. 8)

ěr 耳 'ear[s]' + *miàn* 面 'face':

ěr miàn fēihóng 耳面飛紅 'ears and face blushing red' (ch. 80)

ěr 耳 'ear[s]' + *sāi* 腮 'cheek[s]':

zhuā ěr náo sāi 抓耳撓腮 'tweak one's ears and scratch one's cheeks' (as a sign of delight) (ch. 12)

méi 眉 'brow[s]' + *liǎn* 臉 'face':

chóu méi kǔ liǎn 愁眉苦臉 'worried brows and suffering face' (ch. 62)

méi 眉 'brow[s]' + *mù* 目 'eye[s]' (5 expressions):

méi mù qīngmíng 眉目清明 lit. 'clear brows and eyes', i.e. 'a clear and refined face' (ch. 3)

liǎng wān sì cù fēi cù lǒng yān méi, yì shuāng sì xǐ fēi xǐ hán qíng mù 兩彎似蹙非蹙籠煙眉，一雙似喜非喜含情目 'mist-wreathed brows that seemed to frown, yet were not frowning and passionate eyes that seemed to smile, yet were not smiling' (ch. 3)

méi qīng mù xiù 眉清目秀 lit. 'clear brows and delicate eyes', i.e. 'a clear and delicate face' (ch. 7)

lì méi chēn mù 立眉嗔目 'raised brows and angry eyes' (ch. 7)

méi wān liǔyè gāo diào liǎng shāo, mù héng dānfèng shén níng sān jiǎo 眉灣柳葉高吊兩梢，目橫丹鳳神凝三角 'brows like willow-leaves hanging from high on the tips of two branches, eyes like a red-headed phoenix glowing from all three corners' (ch. 68)

méi 眉 'brow[s]' + *yǎn* 眼 'eye[s]' (12 expressions, 18 instances):

jiànméi xīngyǎn 劍眉星眼 'swordlike brows and starry eyes' (ch. 1)

tiānrán yì gǔ fēngsāo quán zài méishāo, píngshēng wàn zhǒng qíngsī xī duī yǎnjiǎo 天然一股風騷全在眉梢，平生萬種情思悉堆眼角 'His inborn unconventional ways were gathered in the tip of his eyebrows, and his many everyday worries were concentrated in the corner of his eyes.' (ch. 3)

jǐ méi nòng yǎn 擠眉弄眼 lit. 'press the brows together and play with the eyes', i.e. 'make eyes; wink' ch. 9 (twice; some editions

also have *nòng méi jǐ yǎn* 弄眉擠眼, *jǐ yǎn nòng méi* 擠眼弄眉, and, most surprisingly, *jǐ bí nòng méi* 擠鼻弄眉 lit. 'squeeze nose, play with eyes').

shùqǐ liǎng dào sì cù fēi cù de méi, dèng le yì shuāng sì zhēng fēi zhēng de yǎn 豎起兩道似蹙非蹙的眉，瞪了一雙似睜非睜的眼 'raised two brows that seemed to frown but were not frowning and stared with two eyes that seemed to be wide open but were not quite wide open' (ch. 23)

méi cù chūnshān, yǎn pín qiūshuǐ 眉蹙春山，眼顰秋水 'brows frowning like mountains in spring, eyes frowning like autumn waters' (ch. 30)

éméi dàocù, fèngyǎn yuánzhēng 蛾眉倒蹙，鳳眼圓睜 'her moth brows [i.e. fine and delicate eyebrows of a woman] were knit as if standing upside-down, and her phoenix eyes were wide open' (ch. 52)

méishāo yǎnjiǎo 眉梢眼角 'the tip of the brows and the corner of the eyes' (ch. 63)

méi lái yǎn qù 眉來眼去 lit. 'brows come and eyes go', i.e. 'let brows and eyes convey one's feelings' (ch. 72)

nóng méi bào yǎn 濃眉爆眼 'thick brows and eyes on the verge of explosion' (ch. 93)

nóng méi dà yǎn 濃眉大眼 'thick brows and big eyes' (ch. 96)

sǐ méi dèng yǎn 死眉瞪眼 'dead brows and staring eyes [i.e. absentminded and apathetic]' (ch. 110)

méi kāi yǎn xiào 眉開眼笑 'brows open and eyes laughing' (ch. 6, 37, 43, 49, 117, 119)

méi 眉 'brow[s]' + *zuǐ* 嘴 'mouth':

hēi méi wū zuǐ 黑眉烏嘴 'black brows and black mouth' (ch. 24)

méi 眉 'brow[s]' + *kǒu* 口 'mouth':

liǔméi lǒng cuìwù, tánkǒu diǎn dānshā 柳眉籠翠霧，檀口點丹砂 'her willow brows [were hazy as if they] contained an emerald fog, her sandalwood mouth [was red as if it] was painted with cinnabar' (ch. 65)

This list gives 32 different pairs of face terms, occurring in 58 different parallel expressions. One of these expressions (*jǐ méi nòng yǎn* 擠眉弄

眼) occurs twice, another (*méi kāi yǎn xiào* 眉開眼笑) occurs six times. Altogether, the list includes 64 instances of parallel face terms in constructions describing facial appearance or facial expression. Their distribution on the three possible combinations within this principle is as follows:

facial hair + face proper: 6 term pairs, 7 expressions
face proper + facial organ: 20 term pairs, 29 expressions
facial organ + facial hair: 6 term pairs, 22 expressions, 28 instances

As these figures show, the combination face proper + facial organ is most common. The combination facial organ + facial hair does not account for many term pairs, but since some of the term pairs (especially *méi* 眉 + *yǎn* 眼) occur in several different expressions, of which some (*jǐ méi nòng yǎn* 擠眉弄眼 and *méi kāi yǎn xiào* 眉開眼笑) occur more than once, there are almost as many instances of this combination as of the combination face proper + facial organ.

In the present context, the most important fact is that all of the term pairs cited above adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms. This does not mean that there are no exceptions. The number of exceptions, however, is remarkably few.

Some of the exceptions actually serve to further support the case for the Tripartite Division of the Face. In the following famous description of the main protagonist Jia Baoyu, as seen for the first time by his female cousin Lin Daiyu in chapter 3, it is quite clear that the author (or whoever has edited the text) has consciously chosen to construct pairs of terms from the *same* category within the Tripartite Division of the Face:

(3) 面 若 中 秋 之 月
miàn ruò zhōng- qiū zhī yuè

色 如 春 曉 之 花
sè rú chūn- xiǎo zhī huā

鬢 若 刀 裁 眉 如 畫 畫
bìn ruò dāo cái méi rú mò huà

眼 若 桃 瓣 睛 若 秋 波
yǎn ruò táo- bàn jīng ruò qiū- bō

'a face like the mid-autumn moon,
appearance like a spring-morning flower
temple-hair as if cut by knife, brows as if painted with ink
eyes like peach flower petals, eyeballs like autumn waves'

The first line describes the face proper, the second describes hair and the third organs located in the face. In this case, therefore, there is a consistent use of terms from the *same* category within each couplet. The textual history of this passage further reinforces the point. In the 1760 edition 庚辰本, the last line reads:

(4) 面 如 桃 瓣 目 若 秋 波
miàn rú táo- bàn, mù ruò qiū- bō
'face like a peach flower petal, eyes like autumn waves'

In the Royal Household edition 王府本 and the Leningrad edition 列藏本, the same line reads:

(5) 臉 若 桃 瓣 睛 若 秋 波
liǎn ruò táo- bàn, jīng ruò qiū- bō
'face like a peach flower petal, eyes like autumn waves'

Both variations make the last line follow a different principle from the two preceding lines. Editors and commentators seem to have had problems with this line, and in the 1759 edition 己卯本, the two characters 眼若 have been corrected to 面如 with red ink. As I interpret this problem, it consists in a conflict between the expected meaning of the image of flower petals and the principle of using terms from the same category in the Tripartite Division of the Face within each line. While the image of peach flowers is commonly used to describe the beauty of a face (as in *táohuāmiàn* 桃花面 and *táohuāliǎn* 桃花臉 'peach flower face', mostly referring to pretty girls), the same image is less commonly used to describe eyes. Although the term *táohuāyǎn* 桃花眼 'peach flower eyes' does exist,[6] it may have been unknown to some of the editors. Some

[6] Within Chinese physiognomy, the term *táohuāyǎn* 桃花眼 'peach flower eyes' is a

editors have chosen to accept the peach flower petals as an image for beautiful or emotionally expressive eyes, while other editors have chosen to accept that the last line uses parallel face terms from different categories within the Tripartite Division of the Face in order to keep the imagery intact. One edition (1784 edition 甲辰本) has sought to resolve the conflict by changing the whole wording of the last line:

(6) 鼻 如 懸 膽 睛 若 秋 波
bí rú xuán-dǎn, jīng ruò qiū- bō
'nose like a hanging gall-bladder [i.e. with a bulbous tip], eyes like autumn waves'

In this way, the imagery is unproblematic (no matter how awkward the comparison of a nose with a hanging gall-bladder sounds in English), and the two parallel face terms are taken from the same category, as in the preceding lines.

The following description of Jia Baoyu's other cousin Xue Baochai, as seen by Jia Baoyu (ch. 97), also employs face terms from the *same* category within each line:

(7) 盛 妝 艷 服
shèng zhuāng yàn fú

豐 肩 懦 體
fēng jiān nuò tǐ

鬟 低 鬢 髽
huán dī bìn duǒ

眼 瞬 息 微
yǎn shùn xī wēi

'ample make-up and colourful clothes,
well-rounded shoulders and fragile body,

standard term for eyes with a certain shape. See *Complete Compendium on Effective Physiognomy* ch. 3 p. 16. *Hanyu da cidian* vol. 4 p. 981 gives the gloss *qíngyǎn* 情眼 'emotional eyes', which is certainly what Jia Baoyu is supposed to have, though it gives only modern examples of this usage.

bun low and temple hair drooping,
eyes moving and breath feeble'

The first line describes clothes, the second describes the body, the third line describes hair, and the fourth line describes organs in the face or, in the case of *xī* 息 'breath', something that is associated with an organ in the face. Even this passage, therefore, shows a recognition of the Tripartite Division of the Face.

The reason why we can be fairly sure that (3) and (7) are examples of a *conscious* use of terms from the same category within each line is that they contain series of more than one parallel construction. In cases with just one parallel construction, the use of terms from the same category *could*, of course, also be due to such conscious choice, but there is no way to know. If there were many such cases, therefore, it would seriously challenge the validity of the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms as formulated above. In fact, however, there are only two. One is the latter part of a description of Lin Daiyu's reaction to what she considers to be one of Jia Baoyu's improper advances in chapter 23:

(8) 微 腮 帶 怒 薄 面 含 嗔
wēi sāi dài nù bó miàn hán chēn
'her small cheeks carried anger, her little face contained reproach'

The other is a description in chapter 25 of a highly unconventional Buddhist monk who has entered the world from the heavenly spheres:

(9) 鼻 如 懸 膽 兩 眉 長
bí rú xuán- dǎn liǎng méi cháng

目 似 明 星 蓄 寶 光
mù sì míng- xīng xù bǎo- guāng

'nose like a hanging gall-bladder and long brows
eyes like clear stars with precious rays'

In addition, the novel contains two fixed expressions referring to facial expression that break the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel

Lines: *mù dèng kǒu dāi* 目瞪口呆 'eyes staring and mouth gaping' (ch. 1, 33, 94) with the variant *mù dèng kǒu wāi* 目瞪口歪 'eyes staring and mouth askew' (ch. 33), and *yǎo yá qiè chǐ* 咬牙切齒 'bite one's molars and gnash one's teeth' (ch. 99, 103). Both expressions are commonly used in spoken Chinese are not the product of the authors of *The Story of the Stone.*

To sum up, *The Story of the Stone* contains only two parallel constructions that break the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms for no apparent reason, examples (8) and (9). In addition come five parallel constructions — occurring in the two examples (3) and (7) — that do break this principle, but in a consistent manner that reinforces the argument for the Tripartite Division of the Face. Finally, the two fixed expressions *mù dèng kǒu dāi/wāi* 目瞪口呆 / 歪 and *yǎo yá qiè chǐ* 咬牙切齒 occur altogether six times, but are not products of the authors of *The Story of the Stone.*

Since the *general* requirement for contrast in parallel constructions (the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Terms) is not always strictly adhered to,[7] the number of exceptions to the more *specific* requirement for contrast in parallel constructions referring to facial appearance and facial expression (the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms) must be considered extremely small. As mentioned above, the number of different pairs of parallel terms that adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms is 32, and since some of them occur in several different expressions, the total number of different expressions containing such term pairs is 58. Since a couple of these expressions occur several times, the total number of instances of parallel face terms adhering to the Principle of Maxiumum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms is 64. This number is a strong indication that the Tripartite Division of the Face is a culturally valid categorisation.

There are, of course, other instances of parallel face terms taken from the same category in the Tripartite Division of the Face. These are all instances, however, that were never meant to be covered by the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms. Further

[7] Cf., for instance, the repetition in some editions of *ruò* 若 in the last line of example (3) and the repetition in some editions of *níng* 凝 in *sāi níng xīn lì, bí níng ézhī* 腮凝新荔，鼻凝鵝脂 'cheeks clad with fresh lychees [i.e. firm and fresh] and a nose clad with goose-fat [i.e. white and shiny]' (other editions have *ní* 膩 'smeared with' in the second part).

clarification of what this principle actually entails may, therefore, be useful.

First, the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms applies primarily to descriptions in literary or semi-literary Chinese. Syntactic and semantic parallellism is occasionally found even in passages written entirely in the vernacular style, but these passages do not have the semi-poetic flavour of passages written in literary or semi-literary Chinese, and they do not necessarily adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms: *zhāng zhe zuǐ, dèng zhe yǎn* 張著嘴，瞪著眼 'with mouth open and eyes wide open' (ch. 47).

Second, the case of compounds is problematic. The distinction between coordinate compounds and syntactically juxtaposed parallel terms is unclear, since both are combined according to more or less the same rules. The expressions *méi mù* 眉目 lit. 'brows and eyes' (≈ 'facial appearance', ch. 1, 64, 92) and *miàn mù* 面目 lit. 'face and eyes' (≈ 'facial appearance', ch. 6, 47, 55, 58, 96, 116) resemble compounds, but parallel constructions in which *méi* 眉 + *mù* 目 and *miàn* 面 + *mù* 目 occur separately are also common (see the list above). It is also unclear whether *ěr miàn* 耳面 'ears and face' (ch. 80) should be considered a compound or two syntactically juxtaposed terms. In the present discussion, such expressions have been treated as parallel terms (unlike real compounds, which are single terms) when they occur in four-character lines in literary style, as they mostly do: *méi mù qīngmíng* 眉目清明 'clear and refined face' (ch. 1), *miàn mù gǎi sè* 面目改色 '[his] face changed colour' (ch. 96), and *ěr miàn fēihóng* 耳面飛紅 'ears and face blushing' (ch. 80). In all such cases, they adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Face Terms. Compound-like constructions that belong to the vernacular and are not restricted to four-character lines are left out of discussion, even though many of them also adhere to the same principle: *zuǐliǎn* 嘴臉 lit. 'mouth and face', i.e. 'facial appearance' (ch. 6 twice) and *méiyǎn* 眉眼 lit. 'brows and eyes', i.e. 'facial appearance' (ch. 27, 74), with the variant *méiyǎnr* 眉眼兒 (ch. 102).

It is, however, obvious that not all compounds adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Face Terms. One common type of compound consists of two near-synonyms: *liǎnmiàn* 臉面 'face' (ch. 3, 6, 9, 24 *inter alia*), *yǎnmù* 眼目 'eyes' (usually referring to the eyes of a reader [ch. 1 twice] or to unwanted attention to one's affairs [ch. 9

twice, 64), *yǎnjīng* 眼睛 'eyes' (ch. 8, 10, 11, 22 *inter alia*), *húxū* 鬍鬚 'beard' (ch. 23), *yáchǐ* 牙齒 'teeth' (ch. 39, 56), *sāijiá* 腮頰 'cheeks' (ch. 57), *jiásāi* 頰腮 'cheeks' (ch. 44). Within such expressions, both terms belong to the same category within the Tripartite Division of the Face. Each of these expressions is most appropriately viewed as a single term rather than a syntactic combination. Synonym compounds, therefore, are not included in the present discussion of parallel face terms.

Finally, please remember that the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms only applies to constructions describing *appearance* or *expression*. Parallel face terms that refer to other aspects of the face do not have to be taken from different categories within the Tripartite Division of the Face. For instance, parallel descriptions of *sensation* must necessarily refer to sense organs. In *The Store of the Stone*, all such descriptions refer to the ear (*ěr* 耳) and the eye (*yǎn* 眼, in one case referred to metonymically as *móu* 眸 'the pupil'):

yí miàn mù shì qí wén, yí miàn ěr líng qí gē 一面目視其文，一面耳聆其歌 'on the one hand his eyes were looking at the text, on the other hand his ears were listening to the song' (ch. 5)
shēnggē guā ěr, jǐnxiù yíng móu 笙歌聒耳，錦繡盈眸 'music filled his ears, and beautiful sights filled his eyes [lit. pupils]' (ch. 53)
ěr bù páng tīng, mù bù bié shì 耳不旁聽，目不別視 'his ears hear nothing else, and his eyes see nothing else' (ch. 48)
mù bù shì wù, ěr bù wén shēng 目不視物，耳不聞聲 'his eyes unable to see objects, and his ears unable to hear sounds' (ch. 63)
ěr mù suǒ jiàn 耳目所見 'what his ears and eyes can see' (ch. 64)

Expressions referring to tears and snivel also by necessity refer to the nose and the eyes:

yǎnlèi bítì 眼淚鼻涕 'tears and snivel' (ch. 52, 68)
bítì yǎnlèi 鼻涕眼淚 'snivel and tears' (ch. 97)
yǎn gān bí sè 眼乾鼻塞 'eyes dry and nose tight' (ch. 91)

So does one expression referring to drunkenness:

yǎn xíng ěr rè 眼餳耳熱 'eyes drowsy and ears warm' (ch. 21)

In the same way, parallel descriptions of speech always contain two terms for the mouth or mouth parts:

yí miàn mù shì qí wén, yí miàn ěr líng qí gē 一面目視其文，一面耳聆其歌 'on the one hand his eyes were looking at the text, on the other hand his ears were listening to the song' (ch. 5)
chǐ luò shé dùn 齒落舌鈍 'toothless and numbtongued' (ch. 2)
zhuō kǒu chòu shé 濁口臭舌 'dirty mouth and stinking tongue' (ch. 2)
duō zuǐ duō shé 多嘴多舌 lit. 'too many mouths and tongues'; i.e. 'talking too much' (ch. 25)
líng yá lì chǐ 伶牙俐齒 'clever teeth, i.e. glib-tongued'[8] (ch. 73, 120)
dǎ yá fàn zuǐ 打牙犯嘴 'hit tooth and violate mouth, i.e. jest and joke in a flirtatious manner' (ch. 74)
yóu zuǐ pín shé 油嘴貧舌 'oily mouth and garrulous tongue, i.e. glib-tongued' (ch. 75)
líng kǒu lì shé 伶口俐舌 'clever mouth and tongue, i.e. glib-tongued' (ch. 78)
liú zuǐ huá shé 流嘴滑舌 'sleek mouth and oily tongue' (ch. 78)
xián yá dòu chǐ 閑牙鬥齒 'idle molars and struggling teeth, i.e. to engage in idle quarrelling' (ch. 80)
hóng kǒu bái shé 紅口白舌 'red mouth and white tongue' (ch. 98)
wàng kǒu bā shé 妄口巴舌 'preposterous mouth and tongue, i.e. talk nonsense' (ch. 112)

A mixture of sensation and speech occurs in the following expression:

bǎi kǒu cháobàng, wàn mù yázì 百口嘲謗，萬目睚眥 lit. 'a hundred mouths slandering, and ten thousand eyes staring angrily', i.e. 'be looked down upon by e verybody' (ch. 5).

[8] In colloquial Chinese, the characters *líng* 伶 and *lì* 俐 have no meanings by themselves, only in the combination *línglì* 伶俐 'quick-witted'. The expression *líng yá lì chǐ* 伶牙俐齒 may be seen as consisting of the two words *línglì* 伶俐 and *yáchǐ* 牙齒 'teeth', though instead of being juxtaposed to each other, they are intertwined. This and the similar expression *líng kǒu lì shé* 伶口俐舌 are good examples of the difficulty of pinning down word boundaries in Chinese.

Descriptions of non-expressive actions involving the face may or may not adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms:

yǎng miàn juān yǎn 仰面睃眼 'raise one's head and look askance at [sth.] with one's eyes' (ch. 70) (adhering to the principle)
miáo méi huà bìn 描眉畫鬢 'paint brows and temple hair' (ch. 100) (not adhering to the principle)

Most descriptions of health condition, which often resemble descriptions of facial expression, do adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms:

miàn mù zhǒngpò 面目腫破 'face and eyes swollen and torn' (ch. 47)
miàn mù huángshòu 面目黃瘦 'face and eyes yellow and thin' (ch. 55)
liǎnmiàn hěn shòu, mùguāng wú shén 臉面很瘦，目光無神 'his face was very thin, and his eyes were lifeless' (ch. 96)
yīngchún hóng tùn, yùntǔ shēnyín; xìngliǎn xiāngkū, sè chén hǎnhàn 櫻唇紅褪韻吐呻吟，杏臉香枯色陳頦頷 'the red of her cherry lips faded, issuing only sad moans; the fragrance of her apricot face withered away, leaving only dry wrinkles' (ch. 78).

This does not apply, though, to descriptions of health condition involving tears and snivel (see above).

When all is said and done, the fact remains that in literary or semi-literary descriptions of facial appearance or facial expression, parallel face terms are virtually always taken from different categories within the Tripartite Division of the Face. This applies in sections of *The Story of the Stone* that are usually assumed to be the products of different authors. Thus, this seems to be a deep-rooted literary habit among more than one 18th-century writer of Chinese fiction. The two cases in which the author systematically employs parallel face terms from the *same*

category within the Tripartite Division of the Face, examples (3) and (7), also belong to sections of the novel produced by different authors, further strengthening the case for the cultural validity of this way of categorising the various parts of the face.

It remains to be seen whether this literary technique is found in other novels from the same period. While I have not examined other 18th-century novels to see if this is the case, I have browsed through some parts of the novel *The Plum of the Golden Vase* 《金瓶梅詞話》, probably written about 150 years earlier. A very cursory glance at the first 56 chapters of this novel reveals that the same literary technique is *not* predominant in this case. Certainly, the novel does contain many constructions that adhere to the Principle of Maximum Contrast between Parallel Face Terms:[9]

liǎn chèn táohuā, bù hóng bù bái; méi wān xīnyuè, yóu xì yóu wān 臉襯桃花，不紅不白；眉彎新月，尤細尤彎 'a face like a peach-flower, neither red nor white; brows like the new moon, both thin and curved' (ch. 1)

fěnmiàn tōnghóng, yínyá ànyǎo 粉面通紅，銀牙暗咬 'her powder-white face turned all red, and she secretly grit her silver-coloured teeth' (ch. 25)

chén shēng méipàn, hàn shī sāibiān 塵生眉畔，汗濕腮邊 'dust had settled about her eyebrows, sweat had moistened her cheeks' (ch. 15; Roy's translation)

chūn huí xiàoliǎn huā hán mèi, qiǎn cù éméi liǔ dài chóu 春回笑臉花含媚，淺蹙蛾眉柳帶愁 'when spring returns to her smiling face, the flowers are filled with charm; at the slightest knitting of her delicate brows [lit. moth brows], the willows are loaded with worries' (ch. 14)

But we also find an almost equal number of expressions that do not adhere to this principle:

[9] My translations often borrow extensively from Roy's translation *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin P'ing Mei.*

hào chǐ zhū chún 皓齒朱唇 'white teeth and red lips' (ch. 12)
fà nóng bìn zhòng 髮濃鬢重 'thick hair and heavy temple hair' (ch. 29)
fà xì méi nóng 髮細眉濃 'thin hair and thick brows' (ch. 29)
xìngliǎn táosāi 杏臉桃腮 'apricot face and peach cheeks' (ch. 11)

This does not prove that the Tripartite Division of the Face was not culturally valid at the time when *The Plum in the Golden Vase* was written. It does not even prove that this way of categorising the face does not underlie parallel descriptions of facial appearance and facial expression. Remember that while the main rule in *The Story of the Stone* is that parallel face terms in such descriptions be taken from *different* categories, the novel also contains two clear examples of the opposite rule: that parallel face terms in such descriptions be taken from the *same* category. Thus, there exist two rules both of which refer to the Tripartite Division of the Face. In *The Story of the Stone*, one of these rules was infinitely much more commonly used than the other. Could it be that *The Plum in the Golden Vase* puts the two rules on a more equal basis?

If so, we are left with a serious methodological problem. That two parallel face terms must either be taken from the same category or from different categories is a tautology. Thus, passages involving only one parallel couplet do not indicate anything about the existence or non-existence of such rules. Only if we have passages involving more than two parallel couplets or more than two parallel terms can we find out if they relate in a systematic way to this division. In the parts of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* that I have looked at, there seems to be only one such passage, in chapter 2. This single passage, however, does indicate a very strong awareness of the Tripartite Division of the Face:

(10)	黑	十	十	賽	鴉	翎	的	鬢	兒
	hēi-	*shí-*	*shí*	*sài-*	*yā-*	*líng*	*de*	*bìn-*	*r*
	翠	彎	彎	的	新	月	的	眉	兒
	cuì-	*wān-*	*wān*	*de*	*xīn-*	*yuè*	*de*	*méi-*	*r*

清	泠	泠	杏	子	眼	兒	
qīng-	*líng-*	*líng*	*xìng-*	*zi*	*yǎn-*	*r*	
香	噴	噴	櫻	桃	口	兒	
xiāng-	*pēn-*	*pēn*	*yīng-*	*táo*	*kǒu-*	*r*	
直	隆	隆	瓊	瑤	鼻	兒	
zhí-	*lóng-*	*lóng*	*qióng-*	*yáo*	*bí-*	*r*	
粉	濃	濃	紅	艷	腮	兒	
fěn-	*nóng-*	*nóng*	*hóng-*	*yàn*	*sāi-*	*r*	
嬌	滴	滴	銀	盆	臉	兒	
jiāo-	*dī-*	*dī*	*yín-*	*pén*	*liǎn-*	*r*	
輕	裊	裊	花	朵	身	兒	
qīng-	*niǎo-*	*niǎo*	*huā-*	*duǒ*	*shēn-*	*r*	
玉	纖	纖	蔥	枝	手	兒	
yù-	*xiān-*	*xiān*	*cōng-*	*zhī*	*shǒu-*	*r*	
一	捻	捻	楊	柳	腰	兒	
yī-	*niǎn-*	*niǎn*	*yáng-*	*liǔ*	*yāo-*	*r*	
軟	濃	濃	白	面	臍	肚	兒
ruǎn-	*nóng-*	*nóng*	*bái-*	*miàn*	*qí-*	*dù-*	*r*
窄	多	多	尖	十	腳	兒	
zhǎi-	*duō-*	*duō*	*jiān*	*shí*	*jiǎo-*	*r*	
肉	奶	奶	胸	兒			
ròu-	*nǎi-*	*nǎi*	*xiōng-*	*r*			

白 生 生 腿 兒
bái- shēng- shēng tuǐ- r

更 有 一 件
gèng yǒu yí jiàn

緊 揪 揪
jǐn- jiū- jiu

紅 縐 縐
hóng- zhòu- zhòu

白 鮮 鮮
bái- xiān- xiān

黑 十 十
hēi- shí- shí

正 不 知 是 什 麼 東 西！
zhèng bù zhī shì shé- me dōng- xi

'Glossy, black, raven's feather tresses;
Dark, curved, new moon eyebrows;
Clear, cold, almond eyes;
Redolently fragrant cherry lips;
A straight, full, alabaster nose;
Thickly powdered red cheeks;
A handsome, silver salver face;
A light, lissome, flowerlike figure;
Slender, jade-white, scallion-shoot fingers;
A cuddlesome, willow waist;
A tender, pouting, dough-white tummy;
Tiny, turned-up, pointed feet;
Buxom breasts; and
Fresh, white legs.

And there is something else as well:
Tight and squeezy,
Red and wrinkly,
Pale and fresh,
Black and cushioned;
Who can tell what it might be?'
(Roy's translation)

The first two lines (set apart from the rest by their nine-character form) describe hair located in the face, the next three lines describe organs located in the face, then come two lines describing the face proper, while the remaining eight lines (the last of which covers six lines in the layout above) describe the body rather than the face and thus do not concern us directly here. The seven lines describing the face do support the case for the Tripartite Division of the Face.

Further research is needed before we can be sure of the role of the Tripartite Division of the Face in novels written during the Ming and Qing dynasties. For the moment, however, it does seem reasonable to conclude that this categorisation is a basic feature of Chinese ethno-physiology.

The Physiognomy of the Chinese Face

In research on facial expressiveness, a distinction is made between static, slow and rapid facial signals.[10] Appearance primarily has to do with static signals, traits that hardly change over a life-time, and slow signals, traits that change with age and maturation, but not with one's mood or emotional reactions.

While everybody agrees that rapid facial signals are highly expressive of moods and emotions, both scholars and laymen debate to what extent static and slow facial signals are expressive of something beyond their mere physiological properties: personality, character, or even fate. While it seems plausible that one's personality or character leaves permanent marks on one's face, it is less obvious, though certainly possible, that

[10] Cf. Ekman & Friesen 1975:10ff.

there is a correspondence between inborn facial features and inborn personality traits.

In Western fiction, especially since the rise of psychological realism during the 19th century, descriptions of facial and bodily features are often used as a way to describe character or personality. In most cases, the connection is implicit and without theoretical basis. In other cases, however, the author has consciously drawn on works within theoretical physiognomy.[11]

Chinese fiction also commonly assumes some sort of connection between facial or bodily features and character or personality. Some novels draw heavily on theories of physiognomy. For instance, chapter 29 of *The Plum in the Golden Vase* is full of references to the Ming dynasty collection *Complete Compendium on Effective Physiognomy* 《神相全編》 (hereafter referred to as the *Complete Compendium)*, one of the most popular books on physiognomy during the late imperial era.[12] Scattered references to this work is also found in other chapters of the novel.

Within Chinese physiognomy, as represented by the *Complete Compendium*, the main focus is not on personality or character, but on fate. The book is primarily a collection of treatises on the connection between facial or bodily features and career, material wealth, and longevity. A secondary focus is on the connection between facial or bodily features and moral qualities. Questions of character or personality are part of the picture only insofar as they have consequences for moral and fate.

Despite its intense concern with the workings of fate, *The Story of the Stone* does not discuss physiognomy in this traditional sense at all. No direct or indirect reference to the *Complete Compendium* is made. The many descriptions of facial appearance primarily reflect an interest in beauty, not physiognomy. This applies even when face terms are employed that are identical or similar to terms found in the *Complete Compendium.*

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[11] See Tytler 1982.

[12] See David Tod Roy's comments in *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin P'ing Mei* Vol. 1 pp. 471, 527, 538, 539.

For instance, the *Complete Compendium* states that *miàn yù cháng ér fāng* 面欲長而方 'the face should be long and rectangular [i.e. not pointed at the ends]'. In *The Story of the Stone*, the expressions *róng cháng liǎn* 容長臉 (applied to Jia Yun in chapter 24; translated in the *Hànyǔ dà cídiǎn* as *cháng fāng liǎn* 長方臉 'long and rectangular face') and *róng cháng liǎnmiàn* 容長臉面 (applied to Hongyu in chapter 24 and Xiren in chapter 26) above all describe the beauty of these three characters, not their fate.

In other cases, facial beauty is described in terms that are quite different from the expressions used in the *Complete Compendium*. This is, for instance, true of the round shape of the faces of Jia Baoyu (*miàn ruò zhōngqiū zhī yuè* 面若中秋之月 'face like the mid-autumn moon' ch. 3), Xue Baochai (*liǎn ruò yínpén* 臉若銀盆 'face like a silver plate' ch. 8), Jia Tanchun (*yādàn liǎnmiàn* 鴨蛋臉面 'face [as round as] a duck's egg' ch. 3), and Yuanyang (*yādàn liǎnmiàn* 鴨蛋臉面 'face [as round as] a duck's egg' ch. 46). These are also conventional expressions of beauty, cf. the use of the silver plate simile in example (10) from *The Plum in the Golden Vase* above.

In the many cases where *The Story of the Stone* employs terms similar to those found in the *Complete Compendium*, it simply happens to be the case that conventional expressions of beauty are also used as physiognomical terms. In general, a beautiful appearance is considered within physiognomy to be auspicious, while an ugly appearance is considered to be inauspicious. Since most characters in *The Story of the Stone* are exceedingly beautiful (see below), one should think that their fate would be extremely good. Such, however, is not the case. For instance, Wang Xifeng has both "phoenix eyes" (*dānfèngyǎn* 丹鳳眼) and "willow leaf brows" (*liǔyèméi* 柳葉眉). While she is no doubt a beautiful and clever woman, the success promised by such auspicious traits - and that she initially seems to attain - eventually slips out of her hands. According to the *Complete Compendium*, a person with "willow leaf brows" is bound to succeed and become famous (定發達顯揚名). However, Wang Xifeng dies young, and under one interpretation of the novel she has the main responsibility for the fall of the Jia family, brought about in part by her endless scheming and trickery. Her beauty

did not protect her from being illfated. The novel seems to suggest that the connection between appearance and fate is unreliable.

As for the connection between facial appearance and character, *The Story of the Stone* is sometimes explicit in refuting that there is such a connection. One of the poems describing Jia Baoyu in chapter 3 contains the following line:

(11) 縱然生得好皮囊，腹內原來草莽。
'Though outwardly a handsome sausage-skin,
He proved to have but sorry meat within.' (Hawkes' translation)

The narrator adds: 批寶玉極合 'a very suitable comment on Baoyu'. Still, one should perhaps not take this judgement at face value, since elsewhere the narrator tends to sympathise rather strongly with Baoyu's eccentric personality. The poem itself as well as the narrator's comment are probably ironic, as one of the contemporary critics observes: "Only by envisaging Baoyu's appearance and at the same time thinking of his origin [in the mythical realm] can one avoid being deceived by the author" (當設想其像，合寶玉之來歷同看，方不彼[被]作者愚弄).[13]

Another comment refuting the connection between appearance and character is more likely to correspond to the author's real judgement. When in chapter 80 Jia Baoyu compares his cousin's wife Xia Jingui's pretty looks with her wild outbursts of cruel egotism, he asks himself the question:

(12) 舉止形容，也不怪厲，一般是鮮花嫩柳，與眾姊妹不差上下，焉得這等情性？
'There was nothing strange in her behaviour [on this specific occasion] or appearance. She too was as beautiful as fresh flowers and delicate willows, just as good as the other girls. So how could her character be like this?' (ch. 80)

[13] Comment found in the Royal Household edition 王府本 and the Youzheng edition 有正本. See Chan Hing-ho 1986:83.

The connection between appearance and character, the novel seems to say, is one that cannot be trusted.

The lack of accordance between facial appearance on the one hand and fate and character on the other is part of a larger theme within the whole novel. Appearances can be misleading. This applies not only to the appearance of a person, but also, for instance, to the appearance of a whole household. Already in chapter 2 we are told that the Ning and Rong mansions, within which almost the entire novel takes place, are in an awful state in spite of their apparent wealth:

(13)如今外面的架子雖未甚倒，內囊卻也盡上來了。
'By now though the outward frame has not yet fallen, their inner holdings are all but empty.'

In the end, this is connected to the novel's metaphysical theme relating to reality vs. illusion. A beautiful appearance creates an illusion of inner beauty. The reality, unfortunately, may be far less encouraging than such appearances. As Wang Xifeng herself states twice in the novel: 知人知面不知心 'When you know a person, you know his face, but not his heart' (ch. 11 and 94). That such words are uttered by this cruel and scheming, but at the same time charming and beautiful young woman can only be ironic.

That appearances can be misleading does not mean, however, that they always are. On the contrary, *The Story of the Stone* contains plenty of indications that there is a link between facial appearance and character or personality. In chapter 3, for instance, it is said of Jia Baoyu:

(14)天然一股風騷全在眉梢，平生萬種情思悉堆眼角
'His inborn unconventional ways were gathered in the tip of his eyebrows, and his many everyday worries were concentrated in the corner of his eyes.'

There is also no doubt that Lin Daiyu's frowning brows (眉間若蹙 ch. 3) are expressive both of her sad fate and her melancholy mind, and this aspect of her appearance is underlined when Baoyu gives her the "school-

name" *Pin'er* (顰兒 ch. 3, rendered by Hawkes as "Frowner"), a name that the contemporary commentators use almost consistently (though often in the variant *A-pin* 阿顰). The *Complete Compendium* says: "A person with worried eyebrows will be lonely and short-lived" (眉愁者孤短 ch. 3 p. 6).

STUNNING BEAUTY

To judge by the descriptions in *The Story of the Stone*, the Chinese of the mid-18th century must have been outstandingly pretty. In the novel, descriptions of appearance are almost always descriptions of beauty, in most cases stunning beauty. Even illness may add to this beauty instead of disturbing it, as when Lin Daiyu is said to be even sicker than [the famous beauty] Xishi (病如西子勝三分 ch. 3), who was famous for her beautiful sickliness. And it turns out that this beauty is not restricted to people from China, since the blonde girl from the imaginary country Realistan (真真國[14]) is described as having a face like the beauties of Western paintings (那臉面就和那西洋畫上的美人一樣 ch. 52), and even being prettier than any of them (實在畫兒上的也沒他好看).

There are few exceptions to this rule. Though Zhen Shiyin's maid servant Jiaoxing is not stunningly beautiful (無十分姿色), she is certainly charming (卻亦有動人之處) with a certain elegance and a clear and refined face (儀容不俗，眉目清明). At the time when Lin Daiyu enters the Rongguo Mansion her female cousin Xichun is described as being too short and babyish (身量未足，形容尚小 ch. 3), possibly foreshadowing her future as a nun renouncing the temptations of this world. While we suspect that Baoyu's half-brother Jia Huan is not exactly handsome, the novel gives us few clues to his actual appearance. In David Hawkes' translation, he does have "cringing, hang-dog looks and loutish demeanor", and Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang translate the same passage as "vulgar, common appearance" (ch. 23). Furthermore, Chinese readers definitely do tend to see him as ugly, as witnessed by the choice of actor in the TV version of the novel shown in China during the mid 1980's. However, a literal translation of 人物委瑣，舉

[14] Interpreted by some scholars to be Holland, by others to be the countries of the Middle East, and by still others to be Cambodia, cf. Feng Qiyong and Li Xifan 1990:821; *Hongloumeng jiaozhuben* p. 848.

止粗糙[15] would not reveal much about his actual appearance: "weak as a person and coarse in his manners". A lack of elegance rather than outright ugliness seems to be implied in the description of the maid Simple (傻大姐): "with thick brows and big eyes" (濃眉大眼 ch. 96). Finally, the servant Baoyong may be no beauty, but he is more impressive than ugly: "He was something over five feet tall, broad-shouldered and strongly built, with heavy brows and prominent eyes, a protruding forehead, a long beard and a rough, dark complexion" (身長五尺有零，眉背寬肥，濃眉爆眼，磕額長髯，氣色粗黑，垂著手站著 ch. 93, Minford's translation).

In the vast repertory of characters in this novel, the only person who is explicitly described as being ugly is a highly peripheral character, the servant Wang'er's son, who is rumoured to have an ugly appearance (容顏醜陋 ch. 72).

Of course, the overwhelming amount of beautiful people in *The Story of the Stone* is a product of artistic selection and does not reflect mid-18th century reality. The author may have chosen to write about only beautiful people, or, more probably, he has written about all sorts of people, but has chosen to restrict his descriptions of appearance to the most attractive persons in his list of characters. In spite of the many remarkable descriptions of appearance in the novel, the looks of most characters are never described.

Two factors may have influenced this sort of artistic selection. First, there is a personal factor. *The Story of the Stone* relates events that are at least partly based on the author's own lost youth. The novel is written in his later years as a poor drunkard not far from Beijing. The beauty and the wealth of his younger years in Nanjing is long gone, and so are most of the people he knew then. *The Story of the Stone* may be seen as an attempt to recapture - in an idealised way - some of that beauty.

Second, there is a cultural factor. Beauty is a more common artistic subject matter than ugliness all over the world, but even more so in China than in the West. The contrast is especially evident in painting. Goya's *Satyricon* or some of Bosch's paintings could hardly have been

[15] Some editions have 委鎖 or 委瑣 instead of 委蕤 and 粗魯 or 荒疏 instead of 粗糙.

painted in traditional China. Apart from hell paintings that were designed to scare people away from evil deeds, traditional Chinese painters were almost exclusively concerned with beauty. In narrative literature, which is less occupied with static beauty than with dynamic (and hopefully exciting) plots, there is more room for ugliness, and Wu the elder (武大) in the novels *Water Margin* 《水滸傳》 and *The Plum in the Golden Vase* is certainly an ugly person. Even in literature, however, ugliness is there primarily in order to create a comic effect, and it is not common.

There is one type of character in Chinese literature, however, that is far from pretty. The Taoist classic *Zhuangzi* 《莊子》 contains a number of descriptions of people who are ugly, crippled, one-legged, foot-less, toe-less, lip-less, with their necks and shoulders up above their heads and their hips up by their ribs etc. While certainly having a comic effect, their ugliness also has a deeper philosophical meaning. These people are usually said to be people who know the Way. They have transcended conventional values attached to beauty. The Way they know is not one of outward splendour, but of inner strength.

In later art and literature, the ugly sage becomes a common stereotype. Wise persons, whether Taoist or (especially Zen) Buddhist, are simply expected to be less than neat and pretty. Some of the paintings of Bodhidharma (who can hardly have been a great beauty after, as the story goes, having torn off his own eyelids to avoid falling asleep during meditation!) are good examples. While inheriting some of the ugliness of *Zhuangzi*'s cripples, however, this later stereotype often looks much more impressive and imposing despite, or even because of, its lack of beauty.

In *The Story of the Stone,* the Buddhist monk and the Taoist priest who have chosen to enter into the World of Dust are examples of this conventional type. They behave like lunatics and are certainly not pretty: "the monk [was] scabby-headed and barefoot, the Taoist tousle-haired and limping" (那僧則癩頭跣足，那道跛足蓬頭 ch. 1, Hawkes' translation). At the same time, they certainly also look impressive. The novel's first description of their appearance is translated by Hawkes as "each of them remarkable for certain eccentricities of manner and

appearance" and by Yang and Yang as "both of striking demeanour and distinguished appearance" (生得骨格不凡，丰神迥異 ch. 1). A verse in chapter 25 elaborates on the impressive appearance of the Buddhist monk: "his nose was bulbous and his eyebrows long, his two eyes glittered with a starry light" (鼻如懸膽兩眉長，目似明星蓄寶光, Yang and Yang's translation[16]).

In chapter 2, the juxtaposition of decrepit ugliness and transcendental wisdom is even clearer, and this time without the impressive aspect. Jia Yucun accidentally runs into the Temple of Perfect Knowledge 智通寺, where an inscription makes him think that somebody inside the temple may have "made a somersault" (翻過筋斗), i.e. been through frustrating life experiences that have made him look through the hollowness of worldly aspirations. The entrance to the temple, however, had fallen in, and the surrounding wall was in ruins (門巷傾頹，牆垣朽敗). Inside the temple, Yucun only finds a senile old monk (龍鐘老僧) who is deaf, dim-witted and toothless, whose tongue is dull and whose answers bear no relation to the questions asked (既聾且昏，齒落舌鈍，所答非所問). Yucun walks away in disgust, not realising - or so one interpretation of the episode goes - that his concern with outward appearance has made him overlook the supreme wisdom hidden behind this far from impressive surface.

The stone that later enters the world as Jia Baoyu (or, alternatively, as the jade Jia Baoyu had in his mouth when he was born) is also originally big and clumsy, but with a considerable amount of spiritual insight. However, the monk uses magic - literally, "the art of illusion" 幻術 - to transform it into a small and beautiful jade. One of the contemporary commentators to *The Story of the Stone* says:[17]

> After all, people of this world judge things according to what they see.
>
> 世上人原自據看得見處為憑。

[16] Hawkes' translation of 鼻如懸膽 [lit. "nose like a hanging gallbladder"] as "a bottle nose" fails to capture the essentially positive connotations of the Chinese expression.

[17] Chan Hing-ho 1986:7.

Later he adds:

> After all, people of this world favour the false and not the real. As the saying goes: "You can sell three false ones in a day, but not a real one in three days." True indeed!
>
> 世上原宜假，不宜真也。諺云：「一日賣了三個假，三日賣不出一個真。」信哉。

According to these comments, the big and clumsy stone is transformed into a small and beautiful jade, and later - according to one interpretation - into the stunningly beautiful Jia Baoyu, in order to please the tastes of the novel's readers.

If this is correct, the choice of beauty as an almost exclusive focus of descriptions of appearance also has to do with the theme of reality and falsehood that runs through the novel. The author is not simply being nostalgic about his own youth, nor is he just being unconsciously influenced by Chinese artistic traditions. He is consciously creating a universe that he knows to be false, partly in order to win readers, but also in order to expose the emptiness of man's attachment to beauty. Though in the end he is, perhaps, a little too strongly attached to this world of beauty himself to have much credibility as a mediator of transcendental wisdom.

Note, finally, that in none of the very few portrayals of ugly people in this novel are concrete details concerning their facial features (except hair and [lack of] teeth) as much as hinted at. Unfortunately, therefore, *The Story of the Stone* is not a good source for the perception of ugly faces among mid-17th century Chinese. It presents a wealth of material, however, about beauty.

POETIC CONVENTIONS OF FORM

If the ugly sages are conventional types, the icons of beauty are no less so. The descriptions of beautiful people are most often based on fixed formulas with slight variations. Both form and content are restricted by convention, and so are the ideas concerning the relation between

appearance and human character.

With regard to form, most of the descriptions follow strict rules of syntactic and semantic parallellism, including the requirement discussed above that parallel face-part terms must be taken from different face-part categories. The most common pattern consists of a series of four-character expressions. There are two basic subtypes:

In the first subtype, each four-character expression constitutes one whole containing two parallel parts, as in *méi qīng mù xiù* 眉清目秀 lit. 'brows clear and eyes delicate' (where each part consists of a face-part noun subject followed by a predicate; ch. 7) or *fěn miàn zhū chún* 粉面朱唇 lit. 'white face and red lips' (where each part consists of a face-part noun preceded by an attribute; ch. 7).

In the second subtype, each four-character expression is linked to another four-character expression by parallellism. Many of these double four-character expressions contain a face-part noun followed by one of the synonymous verbs *ruò* 若, *rú* 如 or *sì* 似 'to be like' and either a disyllabic noun, as in (15), or a verb-object construction, as in (16):

(15) 面 如 美 玉 目 似 明 星
miàn rú měi yù mù sì míng xīng
'face like a beautiful jade, eyes like clear stars' (ch. 15)

(16) 面 如 傅 粉 唇 若 施 脂
miàn rú fù fěn chún ruò shī zhī
'[his] face [looked as fair] as if applied with powder, [his] lips [red] as if covered by rouge' (ch. 3)

But other pairs of four-character expressions are also common:

(17) 腮 凝 新 荔 鼻 膩 鵝 脂
sāi níng xīn lì bí nì é zhī
'cheeks clad with fresh lychees [i.e. firm and fresh] and a nose smeared with goose-fat [i.e. white and shiny]' (ch. 3)

(18) 面 目 清 秀 身 段 俊 俏
miàn- mù qīng- xiù shēn- duàn jùn- qiào
'face and eyes [i.e. appearance] clear and delicate, body pretty and charming' (ch. 6)

There are also many parallel lines each of which consists of more than four characters. Some of these are expansions of otherwise typically four-character expressions:

(19) 面 若 中 秋 之 月
miàn ruò zhōng- qiū zhī yuè

色 如 春 曉 之 花
sè rú chūn- xiǎo zhī huā

'a face like the mid-autumn moon, appearance like a spring-morning flower' (ch. 3)

And some of them are themselves divisible into smaller chunks of four characters:

(20) 眉 灣 柳 葉 高 吊 兩 梢
méi wān liǔ- yè gāo diào liǎng shāo

目 橫 丹 鳳 神 凝 三 角
mù héng dān- fèng shén níng sān jiǎo

'brows like willow-leaves hanging from high on the tips of two branches, eyes like a red-headed phoenix glowing from all three corners' (ch. 68)

But most of them are simply independent patterns of as many characters a line as the author has found use for:

(21) 一 雙 丹 鳳 [三 角] 眼
yì shuāng dān- fèng sān jiǎo yǎn

兩 彎 柳 葉 [吊 梢] 眉
liǎng wān liǔ- yè diào- shāo méi

'a pair of [triangular, i.e. almond-shaped] eyes like those of a phoenix with red head and wings, two bows of eyebrows [with hanging tips] like willow-leaves' (ch. 3)[18]

(22) 兩 彎 似 蹙 非 蹙 籠 煙 眉
liǎng wān sì cù fēi cù lǒng yān méi

一 雙 似 喜 非 喜 含 情 目
yì shuāng sì xǐ fēi xǐ hán qíng mù

'mist-wreathed brows that seemed to frown, yet were not frowning and passionate eyes that seemed to smile, yet were not smiling' (ch. 3)

Parallel lines sometimes rhyme, as is arguably the case in (20), but this is not common. The rules of tone harmony found in poetry are not adhered to. Thus, these descriptions are not poems in the traditional sense, and the copiers of handwritten manuscripts never seem to employ the graphic conventions that they often use for setting poems apart from the main text. When David Hawkes in his translation chooses to set some of these descriptions apart from the main text and to make them rhyme like ordinary poems, he adds something to the text that was not originally there. The language of such parallel lines, however, is almost exclusively literary Chinese, as opposed to the more colloquial language found in the main text.

Descriptions of appearance often appear in a wider context, in which clothes, jewellery and the person's character are also included. The full description of a person consists of three parts:

[18] The bracketed parts are included in some manuscripts, but not in others.

1. Descriptions of clothes and jewellery (including hair style), almost always starting from the head and moving downwards.

2. Descriptions of bodily and facial appearance, often though far from always starting with the body, moving on to the head, the face, and finally parts of the face (including organs and hair located in the face).

3. Descriptions of the person's character, sometimes followed by further comments.

Thus, descriptions tend to start with external accessories and end up with internal qualities. There are tendencies to parallellism in all parts, but most clearly in part 2. While parts 1 and 2 are always easily distinguishable, parts 2 and 3 are mostly interwoven, though almost always with a clear tendency to end up with a characterisation of inner qualities rather than purely external features.

The following description of Wang Xifeng (ch. 3) is a typical example:

1.

頭上	戴著	金絲八寶攢珠	髻，
	綰著	朝陽五鳳挂珠	釵，
項上	戴著	赤金盤螭瓔珞	圈，
裙邊	繫著	豆綠宮絛雙衡比目玫瑰	佩；
身上	穿著	縷金百蝶穿花大紅羊緞窄褂	襖，
外	罩	五彩刻絲石青銀鼠	褂，
下	著	翡翠撒花洋縐	裙；

'On her head she had a gold-filigree tiara with jewels and pearls,
coiled up by pearl-adorned hair-clasps in the form of five phoenixes facing the sun,
Round her neck she carried a red-gold necklet in the form of a coiling dragon with pearls and jades,
To her skirt were attached double rose-red jade pendants with pea-green tassels;
On her body she wore a close-fitting red satin jacket with gold-

thread butterflies and flowers,
She was draped in a turquoise cape with white squirrel linings and coloured silk embroideries,
She wore a skirt of kingfisher-blue crepe patterned with flowers ...'

2 + 3. 一雙丹鳳三角眼，
兩彎柳葉吊梢眉，
身量苗條，
體格風騷：
粉面含春威不露，
丹唇未啟笑先聞。

'... With a pair of almond-shaped [lit. triangular] eyes like a red-headed phoenix,
And two bows of eyebrows with hanging tips like willow-leaves,
Of slender figure,
And seductive grace:
Since her powdered face had the charm of springtime, her awe-inspiring power did not reveal itself,
Before her crimson lips had even parted, her laughter was already audible.'

The semi-parallellism of all lines of part 1 has been indicated graphically by grouping the Chinese characters according to the following pattern:

Place N + V of wearing + Attribute + N for clothes/accessories

All seven lines follow this pattern, except that line 2 lacks the initial place noun. This parallellism comes out only partly in the translation, in which the final noun is no longer final, and in which the two last lines lack a place noun corresponding to Chinese *wài* 外 'outside' and *xià* 下 'beneath'.

In parts 2 + 3, in which each couplet has strict parallellism, only the last two lines explicitly refer to character traits (or at least traits of behaviour), though such traits may be implied even in the first lines,

and concrete descriptions of facial features occur even in the last two lines.

In the following description of Xue Baochai (ch. 8), parts 2 and 3 are more clearly distinguished:

1. 頭上 挽著 漆黑油光 的 髻兒，
穿著 水綠色 棉襖，
玫瑰紫二色金銀鼠比肩兒 掛兒，
蔥黃綾子 棉裙，
一色半新不舊，看去不覺奢華。

'On her head was coiled a shining black bun,
She was wearing a light-green padded jacket,
A rose-red sleeveless jacket with gold-thread embroideries and snow-weasel fur lining,
And a padded skirt of leek-yellow silk,
Her clothes were none too new, and there was nothing ostantatious about her look ...'

2. 唇不點而紅，
眉不畫而翠，
臉若銀盆，
眼如水杏，

'... Her lips were red without make-up,
Her brows were emerald without paint.
Her face was like a silver plate,
Her eyes were like water apricots ...'

3. 罕言寡語，
人謂安分隨時，
自云藏愚守拙。

'... Of few words and rare speech,
Others said she knew her place and followed the customs of the times,
She herself said she was hiding her stupidity and guarding her simplicity.'

This example shows the same tendencies to parallellism in part 1 as the example above, though the place noun column is only filled in the first line, the verb of wearing/attaching column only in the two first lines, and the last line breaks completely with the pattern. Again, each couplet in part 2 shows strict parallellism, as do the last two lines of part 3, while line 1 of part three has internal parallellism.

In the descriptions of Jia Yingchun and Jia Tanchun (ch. 3), part 1 is absent, while parts 2 and 3 are clearly distinguished. First Jia Yingchun:

2. 肌膚微豐，
合中身材，
腮凝新荔，
鼻膩鵝脂，

'Her skin was slightly plumpish,
And she was of medium height,
Her cheeks were clad with fresh lychees [i.e. firm and fresh],
And her nose was smeared with goose-fat [i.e. white and shiny]
...'

3. 溫柔沈默，
觀之可親。

'... Gentle and demure,
She looked very approachable.'

Then Jia Tanchun:

2. 削肩細腰，
長挑身才，
鴨蛋臉面，
俊眼修眉，

'She had sloping shoulders and a slender waist,
And she was tall of height,

Her face was as round as a duck's egg,
With pretty eyes and well-trimmed brows …'

3. 顧盼神飛，
文彩精華，
見之忘俗。

'… Her eyes were dancing and animated,
Her literary grace was resplendent.
Looking at her one forgot everything vulgar.'

In both these descriptions, the tendencies to parallellism is weaker, with only lines 3 and 4 of the first description exhibiting strict interlinear parallellism. In addition, line 4 of the second description has intralinear parallellism. There is also a tendency to parallellism between the two descriptions (which occur close to each other in the text), especially between the last lines of each description.

A few descriptions break the general pattern by placing the description of clothing behind the description of facial and bodily appearance, as in the descriptions of Jia Rong and Xiren. First Jia Rong:

2. 面目清秀，
身材俊俏，

'His face and eyes [i.e. appearance] were clear and delicate,
His figure was handsome and charming …'

1. 輕裘寶帶，
美服華冠。

'… With light furs and a jewelled girdle,
Beautiful clothes and an elegant hat.' (ch. 6)

Then Xiren:

2. 細挑身材，
容長臉面，

'With a slender figure,
And a long face ...'

1. 穿著 銀紅　　襖兒，
　　青緞　　背心，
　　白綾細折 裙。

'... Wearing a silver-red jacket,
A sleeveless jacket of black satin,
And a pleated skirt of white silk damask.' (ch. 26)

These are clearly exceptions, however, from a general pattern that puts strong limitations on the form of descriptions of a person's appearance and clothing.

POETIC CONVENTIONS OF CONTENT

What, then, do all the beauties in *The Story of the Stone* actually look like? What is the ideal face for a mid-17th century Chinese? The answers to these questions have to take into account the shape and colour of the face and the face parts, as well as the character traits that they express.

With regard to shape, the faces of persons in the novel may be round, egg-formed or long. The round form is shared by Jia Baoyu (*miàn ruò zhōngqiū zhī yuè* 面若中秋之月 'face like the mid-autumn moon' ch. 3) and Xue Baochai (*liǎn ruò yìnpén* 臉若銀盆 'face like a silver plate' ch. 8). The egg-formed shape is common to Jia Tanchun and the maid servant Yuanyang (*yādàn liǎnmiàn* 鴨蛋臉面 'face [as round as] a duck's egg' ch. 3 and 46) A long face is common to Jia Yun, the maid servant Xiaohong (who falls in love with Jia Yun), and Xiren (as seen by Jia Yun): *róng cháng liǎn(miàn)* 容長臉(面) (ch. 24 and 26). Though all these characters are good-looking, there is hardly any doubt that the beauty of faces increases with their roundness. This seems to be the case both for male and female characters. The ideal face as depicted in *The Story of the Stone* seems to deviate from the ideal of the *Complete Compendium*, according to which "the face should be long and rectangular" (面欲長而方, ch. 3 p. 2).

Both Jia Yucun and the fat and stupid maid servant Simple have broad faces (*miàn kuò* 面闊 ch. 1 and 73). But while this is seen as a positive trait in the former, it is clearly a negative trait in the latter, perhaps because she is a girl, and because it adds to her fatness.

Having a straight nose (*zhí bí* 直鼻 ch. 1) like Jia Yucun seems to be a positive trait, as does having a high (i.e. highrooted) nose (*gāogāo de bízi* 高高的鼻子 ch. 46) like Yuanyang. Having a nose with a bulbous tip, a "nose like a hanging gall-bladder" (*bí rú xuándǎn* 鼻如懸膽), as do the mythical Buddhist monk ch. 25 and Jia Baoyu ch. 3 [only in the 1784 edition 甲辰本], is clearly considered both impressively beautiful and very auspicious. The *Complete Compendium* states repeatedly that such a trait brings wealth and rank (*fùguì* 富貴) and glory and splendour (*rónghuá* 榮華) (ch. 3 p. 20-22).

Having what is perceived as a "rectangular" (i.e. broad and thick) mouth (*kǒu fāng* 口方 ch. 1) like Jia Yucun also seems to be a good thing, and the same applies to his well-balanced cheeks (*quán sāi* 權腮 ch. 1). The *Complete Compendium* agrees that a "rectangular" mouth is good: "the mouth should be rectangular and big" (口須要方大, ch. 2 p. 2). For some reason, the physiognomists consider such a mouth to speak truthfully: "a mouth that is rectangular like the character 四 ['four'] is trustworthy and truth-inclining" (口方四字信宜真, ch. 3 p. 31). Though the irony may be unintended, the name of the person with this ostensibly truthful mouth has been paronomastically interpreted as *jiǎyǔ cún* 假語存 'fictitious stories recorded'[19] or even 'false words survive', and Jia Yucun is not exactly a paragon of truthfulness.

As for eyes and eyebrows, Wang Xifeng's phoenix eyes[20] and her brows like willow leaves[21] are obviously conceived of as being dazzlingly beautiful. The physiognomic implications of her appearance have been discussed above. Her good looks do not prevent her from being ill-fated. The same is true of Third Sister You, who also has "willow brows"

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[19] Wu Shih-ch'ang 1961:65 (n. 4).

[20] I.e. slanting eyes, *dānfèng yǎn* 丹鳳眼 ch. 3, in many editions phoenix eyes with sharp edges: *dānfèng sānjiǎo yǎn* 丹鳳三角眼.

[21] *Liǔyè méi* 柳葉眉 ch. 3, in many editions brows like willow leaves hanging from the tips of the branches: *liǔyè diàoshāo méi* 柳葉吊梢眉.

(*liǔméi* 柳眉 ch. 65), but who kills herself after having been left by her fiancé.

In the case of Lin Daiyu, the beauty of her frowning (*cù* 蹙 or *pín* 顰) brows is similar to the beauty of her sickliness, being a direct expression of her constantly worrying nature. The same is true of the actress Lingguan, whose 'brows [were] frowning like mountains in spring', and whose 'eyes [were] frowning like autumn waters' (眉蹙春山，眼顰秋水), and her comportment is explicitly compared to Lin Daiyu's (大有林黛玉之態) (ch. 30). The physiognomic implications of this trait have been discussed above.

Jia Yucun's "sword brows" (*jiànméi* 劍眉 ch. 1) are also considered both beautiful and auspicious (cf. *Complete Compendium* ch. 3, p. 9).

With regard to colour, the ideal is clearly to have as one's natural colour the colours that are associated with the best types of make-up, without having to use that make-up. As for the skin of the face, the most attractive colour seems to be the white colour of face powder. This is the natural colour of the face of at least three boys: Jia Baoyu (面如傅粉 ch. 3), Qin Zhong (粉面 ch. 7), and Jiang Yuhan (面如傅粉 ch. 93). It is harder to say if Wang Xifeng's face (粉面 ch. 3) is natural or a result of powdering. A different way of describing the same white colour occurs in the expression "a face brighter [lit. whiter] than the full moon" (面如滿月猶白 ch. 63), said of the actress Fangguan.

The freshness associated with spring flowers is used in descriptions that may have to do with the light red colour in a healthy and animated face. This is the case with Jia Baoyu (色如春曉之花 ch. 3 and 面若春花 ch. 15) and Wang Xifeng (粉面含春威不露 ch. 3 and 俏麗若三春之桃 ch. 68).

The colour of Yingchun's face seems to be whiter and more shining, with cheeks like fresh lychees (腮凝新荔 ch. 3) and a nose like soap made from goose fat (鼻膩鵝脂 ch. 3).

In descriptions of the brows, the lips and hair, the ideal is also to have naturally what others may achieve by applying make-up or (in the case of the hair at the temples) using a knife. In these traits, there is a certain similarity between Baoyu, whose brows look as if they have been painted with ink (眉如畫墨 ch. 3) and whose lips look as if they

have been coloured with rouge (唇若施脂 ch. 3), and Baochai, whose lips are red without the use of rouge, and whose brows are emerald green without the use of paint (唇不點而紅，眉不畫而翠 ch 8). Similar lips are found in the actor Jiang Yuhan, whose lips look as if they have been painted red (唇若塗朱 ch. 93, some editions have 硃 'cinnabar' instead of 朱 'red; vermillion') and Qin Zhong, who simply has red (or vermillion) lips (朱唇 ch. 7). As for temple hair, Baoyu's looks as if it has been cut with a knife (鬢若刀裁 ch. 3), while Baochai's seems to be a little less stiff (鬢髾 ch. 97). Hair on the head should be as black and shining as possible, like Hongyu's (黑鬒鬒的頭髮, other editions 黑鴉鴉的頭髮 ch. 24), Yuanyang's (烏油頭髮 ch. 46) or Fangguan's (烏油似的頭髮 ch. 58), though the blonde girl from the West (lit. 'yellow hair' 黃頭髮 ch. 52) is also judged to be exceedingly beautiful.

Beautiful eyes may be shining like stars, as those of Jia Yucun (星眼 ch. 1) and the Prince of Bei-jing (目似明星 ch. 15). Jia Baoyu's eyes are also shining, but more than that: they are shining black, as were they painted using black lacquer (目如點漆 ch. 15). Furthermore, Jia Baoyu has limpid eyes, or more literally "eyes like autumn waves" (睛若秋波 ch. 3). The image of autumn waters is used to describe the moist eyes of several girls in the novel: Lingguan (eyes frowning like autumn waters 眼顰秋水 ch. 30), Fangguan (eyes clearer than autumn waters 眼如秋水還清 ch. 63), and Third Sister You (autumn-water eyes 秋水眼 ch. 65).

However, beauty is not just a question of external features, but just as much of character traits associated with these features. Although the authors do not seem to assume a strong correlation between facial features and (good or bad) fate, and although there are cases where a correlation between facial features and character is explicitly denied, the connection between appearance and character is probably much closer in a novel like this than in real life. The only character in the novel who is explicitly said to have an ugly face, the son of Wang'er, is also known to drink and gamble. Jia Huan, whom we suspect of being far from handsome, is one of the few characters that is almost entirely devoid of sympathetic traits. Of Jia Baoyu it is said that his inborn unconventional ways are gathered in the tip of his eyebrows, and that his many everyday worries

are concentrated in the corner of his eyes (天然一段風騷全在眉梢，平生萬種情思悉堆眼角 ch. 3). To be sure, appearances can be misleading, as we have seen above. By and large, however, *The Story of the Stone* does treat appearance as being an outward manifestation of personality and character. All the beautiful people also have wonderful (if not always sympathetic) personalities.

The most celebrated psychological feature described in the novel is the strong emotionality found both in the main protagonist Jia Baoyu and in his beloved cousin Lin Daiyu. Baoyu's limpid eyes and dark and clear-cut eyebrows are beautiful primarily because of their expressive force. The same holds for Daiyu's "mist-wreathed brows [which] at first seemed to frown, yet were not frowning" and "her passionate eyes [which] at first seemed to smile, yet were not merry" (兩彎似蹙非蹙籠煙眉，一雙似喜非喜含情目 ch. 3, Hawkes' translation).

Both Baoyu and Daiyu carry emotions that do not fit into conventional society. That is what the author likes about them, that is what they like about each other, and that is what Chinese readers have admired ever since. During the 19th century, looking ill and tearful like Lin Daiyu became a fashion among young upper-class girls. Like the image of the ugly sage discussed above, the strong emotionality of Baoyu and Daiyu is an instance of a seemingly unconventional feature that has become a conventional object of admiration. Actually, the idealisation of emotions (*qíng* 情) became conventional long before *The Story of the Stone* was written.[22]

I have already mentioned that the appearance of most characters in *The Story of the Stone* has been left undescribed (or described in general, abstract terms like *měi* 美 'beautiful', *jùn* 俊 'handsome', and *xiù* 秀 'pretty, delicate'). Most descriptions of appearance relate to young female characters with whom Baoyu is very intimate or boys or young men to whom he feels an attraction, probably homosexual: Qin Zhong, the Prince of Bei-jing, and Jiang Yuhan. We also get a few words about Jia Yucun and Jia Yun in the chapters in which they fall in love. The very fact that a person's appearance is described at all seems to indicate that there is some kind of erotic theme attached to him or her. With the

[22] Cf. Wang 1994 and Li 1993.

single exception that Grandmother Jia's temple hair is described as silvery grey (鬢髮如銀 ch. 3), the appearance of older members of the Jia family is never offered as much as a word of description.[23]

The Psychology of the Chinese Face

While appearance primarily has to do with static and slow signals, facial expressions have to do with rapid signals. These are more obviously expressive than the static and slow ones, since what they express are not permanent qualities, but qualities that change just as rapidly as the signals themselves: emotions.

To what extent are facial expressions and their relation to specific emotions universal? This question has intrigued scholars ever since Charles Darwin proposed that most expressions are in fact shared by all people irrespective of race and culture.[24] Many have disagreed with him, though in the past few decades the case for a high degree of universality has been supported by several concrete studies based on experimental research.[25]

When reading *The Story of the Stone,* a westerner soon discovers that he is able to recognise and understand many, perhaps most of the facial expressions described. When the characters of this novel blush, for instance, it is usually because they feel embarrassed, though the reasons for their embarrasment may differ from those common in the West. However, he will also discover expressions that he hardly knows from his own culture, such as the habit of sticking one's tongue out when one is overwhelmed by fear. To some extent, therefore, facial signals and their interpretation must be learned.

In a modern culture, one would probably have preferred to study facial expressions by making video recordings of people in interaction.

[23] The frightening appearance of ghosts and monsters is, however, described several times. Their faces are three times described as being green (*qīng* 青 ch. 25, 39, 81, plus the colour term "ghost-face green" *guǐliǎnqīng* 鬼臉青 ch. 41) and once as being yellow (*huáng* 黃 ch. 102. Their hair or beard may be red (*hóng* 紅 ch. 39, 102) or white (*bái* 白 ch. 25).

[24] Darwin 1872 actually discusses the occurrence of several expressions in various races, see for instance his long discussion on blushing (p. 315-320).

[25] See, for instance, Ekman & Friesen 1975.

If we want to study pre-modern Chinese culture, that option is not open. A novel obviously provides less accurate data than a video camera. At best, it gives us the selection of facial expressions that have been noticed by the author, that he has been able to find words for, and that he has judged to be worthy of description. Just as the almost exclusive focus on stunningly beautiful people does not mean that all mid-17th century Chinese were pretty, so the descriptions of rapid facial signals may also have been stylised and distorted as a result of personal, cultural and artistic factors.

There is, however, a marked difference between descriptions of appearance and descriptions of facial expressions. The former are mostly written in literary Chinese in a semi-poetic style with strict syntactic and semantic parallellism, quite a few rhymes, and many fixed patterns, while the latter are dominated by colloquial Chinese, with little use of poetic effects like parallellism and rhyme, and without fixed patterns of description. Descriptions of facial expressions, therefore, belong to a much more realistic mode of writing than the highly stylised descriptions of appearance. The semi-poetic style is not entirely absent even in descriptions of facial expressions, and literary four-character expressions are still often clearly preferred over less formalised descriptions. Some of the four-character expressions even show internal parallellism (like *liǎn hóng ěr chì* 臉紅耳赤 'face red and ears red' ch. 71) or occur in parallel series (like *liǎng jiá wēi hóng, shuāng mǒu dài sè* 兩頰微紅，雙眸帶澀 'two cheeks slightly red, two eyes [lit. pupils] somewhat dry' ch. 100). In general, however, both form and content of passages describing facial expressions are much less bound by convention than descriptions of appearance. They may be assumed to be far more realistic, though obviously less realistic than a video camera.

A novel also gives us something that a video camera could hardly provide. It gives us a part of the cultural filter through which facial expressions are perceived. A video camera might help us record a certain variation in the facial colour associated with anger. But it would hardly help us classify these variations and give them culturally valid labels like "red", "yellow", "white" and "green". In *The Story of the Stone,* all these colours are included in descriptions of anger:

dǔ qì hóng le liǎn 堵氣紅了臉 'felt so wronged that her face turned red' (ch. 59),
qì huáng le liǎn 氣黃了臉 'got so angry his face turned yellow' (ch. 9),
qì bái le liǎn 氣白了臉 'got so angry their faces turned white' (ch. 71),
qì de yǎn hóng miàn qīng 氣的眼紅面青 'so angry that her eyes turned red and her face green' (ch. 60, only Royal Household edition 王府本 and 1784 edition 甲辰本)

The vast array of rapid facial signals may at first look confusing. However, most signals fall within one of the following categories:

1. change of colour
2. emission of fluid
3. muscular activity

Only a few signals fall entirely outside these categories, as for instance the expression *máo fà dàoshù* 毛髮倒豎, referring to the "standing up" of hair (both on the head and the body) associated with intense fear.

Rapid facial signals may be spontaneous or volitional. Blushing is a typical example of a spontaneous signal, while sticking one's tongue out to express fear is an example of a volitional signal. The distinction is gradient. The most typically spontaneous expressions involve either changes in facial colour (sometimes accompanied by swollenness and a change in skin temperature) or emission of fluid (like sweating or shedding tears). Such features are more or less beyond one's control. Muscular reactions like frowning or staring are easier to control, though they also often occur spontaneously. The more explicitly communicative a muscular reaction is, the higher the degree of volition. For instance, pouting one's lips to point the way (*nǔ zuǐ(r)* 努嘴(兒) ch. 7, 36, 64, 67, 82, 89, 96, 109, 噘嘴兒 ch. 109) is more clearly volitional than doing more or less the same thing as a reaction after having been unrightly accused (*juē zuǐ* 撅嘴 ch. 19, 91 [only some editions]). A muscular

reaction that involves contact between two different body parts, such as covering one's face with one's hands (or a handkerchief), is more clearly volitional than one that does not.

CHANGE OF COLOUR

There are two types of facial colour change, one occurring on the skin of the face, and one occurring in the eyes.

1. Face colour

Changes of face colour are perceived as a very central aspect of facial expressions, so central that words seemingly referring to face colour (*liǎnsè* 臉色, *miànsè* 面色, *qìsè* 氣色, *shénsè* 神色, *qíngsè* 情色 or most often simply *sè* 色) are more frequently used to refer to facial expressions in general. For instance, the distinction between *yuànsè* 怨色 'resentful look' (ch. 2), *nùsè* 怒色 'angry look' (ch. 35, 55, 77), *lìsè* 厲色 'stern look' (ch. 2, 19), *kuìsè* 愧色 'embarrassed look' (ch. 69), *qièsè* 怯色 'timid look' (ch. 44), *zhèngsè* 正色 'stern look' (ch. 36, 41, 73, 79, 94, 95, 97), *yuèsè* 悅色 'happy look' (ch. 68), and *xǐsè* 喜色 'delighted look' (ch. 35, 119) is not simply based on colour, but on the whole range of facial signals associated with each emotion. In fact, most words seemingly referring to face colour are never used with colour terms at all, only with terms for various psychological qualities:

zháo le nǎo de qìsè 著了惱的氣色 'angry look' (ch. 10)
qìsè píngdìng le 氣色平定了 'his face looked calmer' (ch. 10)
shénsè cōngmáng 神色匆忙 'hurried look' (ch. 82)
shénsè huǎnghū 神色恍惚 'absentminded look' (ch. 119)
qíngsè ruò chī 情色若痴 'stupid look' (ch. 70)

They may also be used in descriptions of unspecified changes in facial expression (probably including face colour), mostly associated with anger, fear or health condition:

qìsè gēngbiàn 氣色更變 (ch. 74)
shénsè gēngbiàn 神色更變 (ch. 101)

biàn sè 變色 (ch. 79, 81, 104)

The verb *(gēng)biàn* (更)變 simply means 'to change', and the context usually indicates the nature of the change.

Apart from the simple term *sè* 色 and the ambiguous term *yánsè* 顏色 (which may mean either 'facial expression' or 'colour'), however, the various terms with *sè* 色 never seem to be used in descriptions of emotionally determined face colour as such.

When that is said, however, concrete descriptions of changes in face colour are extremely numerous. Most descriptions use colour terms, but some use similes involving colour: *yánsè rú xuě* 顏色如雪 'face colour like snow' (ch. 97).

The most common colour involved is red. When a face turns red, that usually signals some kind of embarrassment: one blushes. The red colour comes from a reflexive diffusion of blood into the veins found just beneath the face skin. At its most intense, the red colour may cover both face and ears (*liǎn hóng ěr chì* 臉紅耳赤 'face red and ears red' ch. 19, *miàn hóng ěr chì* 面紅耳赤 'face red and ears red' ch. 71, *ěr miàn fēihóng* 耳面飛紅 'ears and face crimson' ch. 80), though more commonly it is simply said to cover the face (*liǎn hóng* 臉紅, *miàn hóng* 面紅 etc.).

Within the face, the cheeks seem to be the part most closely associated with this change of colour: *liǎng jiá wēi hóng* 兩頰微紅 'both cheeks turned slightly red' (ch. 100), *liǎng jiá hóngcháo* 兩頰紅潮 'both cheeks reddened' (ch. 109), *liǎng quán hóngchì* 兩顴紅赤 'both cheeks turned red' (ch. 97), *sāi shàng tōnghóng* 腮上通紅 'the cheeks turned completely red' (ch. 34). The combination of cheeks and ears also occurs: *dài sāi lián ěr tōnghóng* 帶腮連耳通紅 'both cheeks and ears were completely red' (ch. 23).

The depth of the colour reflects the depth of the feeling, from pink (as in the expression *fěn miàn hán xiū* 粉面含羞 'face pink with embarrassment' ch. 24) through different shades of red (*wēi hóng* 微紅 'slightly red', *fēihóng* 飛紅 'crimson', *tōnghóng* 通紅 'completely red' in addition to just *hóng* 紅, *chì* 赤 or *hóngchì* 紅赤 'red') to purple (*zǐ*

紫). The depth of the red colour may be stronger in the middle of the cheeks than at the peripheries, as expressed by the term *hóngyùn* 紅暈.

The red colour often and the violet colour always occur along with the word for "swollen": *hóngzhàng* 紅漲 'red and swollen' (ch. 6, 25) (or 紅脹 ch. 30), *zǐzhàng* 紫漲 (ch. 32, 71, 74, 94, 110, also written 紫脹 ch. 30, 31, 44), *liǎn hóng tóu zhàng* 臉紅頭脹 (ch. 29), *liǎn zhàng tōnghóng* 臉脹通紅 'face swollen and completely red' (ch. 120), reflecting the fact that the blood in the veins also makes the face skin look swollen. The rise in temperature accompanying the diffusion of blood into the veins is also sometimes made explicit, as in the expression *miàn hóng ěr rè* 面紅耳熱 'face red and ears hot' (ch. 109) and the following sentence:

(23)……心上一動，臉上一熱，必然也是紅的……
'... her heart started beating and her face felt hot, unavoidably also turning red ...' (ch. 87)

The link between the red colour and the feeling of embarrassment usually has to be inferred by the reader, though sometimes it is made explicit, as in the expression *xiūhóng* 羞紅 'red with embarrassment' (ch. 30, 80) or numerous expressions consisting of the stative verb *xiū* 羞 + the complementiser *de* 得 (or 的) + a complement describing face colour, e.g. *xiū de liǎn shàng tōnghóng* 羞的臉通紅 'so embarrassed that his face turned completely red' (ch. 32). Sometimes the more vague term "distressed" (*jí* 急) is used rather than "embarrassed" (*xiū* 羞).

In addition to embarrassment, pent-up feelings of anger may also result in red face colour: *dǔ qì hóng le liǎn* 堵氣紅了臉 'felt so wronged that her face turned red' (ch. 59). Quite often, embarrassment and anger are combined: *yòu xiū yòu qì ... biē de liǎn zǐzhàng* 又羞又氣……憋得臉紫漲 'she got both embarrassed and angry ... and unable to give vent to her feelings, her face turned purple' (ch. 71).

The most common colour mentioned in connection with anger, however, is yellow: *liǎn dōu qì huáng le* 臉都氣黃了 'his face got all yellow from anger' (ch. 29), *qì de huáng le liǎn* 氣的黃了臉 'so angry his face turned yellow' (ch. 31), *qì de miàn rú jīnzhǐ* 氣的面如金紙 'so

angry his face was like gold-leaf' (ch. 33). This colour, which Western culture hardly perceives as signalling anger, has the yellowish skin colour of the Mongoloid race as its basis. In *The Story of the Stone*, a face without rouge and powder is considered to be yellow: *yě bù shī zhīfěn, huánghuáng liǎnr* 也不施脂粉，黃黃臉兒 'without rouge and powder, with a yellow face' (ch. 44). During anger, therefore, the face is not only seen as turning yellow, but more intensely yellow than usual.

The colour yellow may, however, also be associated with fear: *xià de huáng le liǎn* 嚇得黃了臉 'got so scared her face turned yellow' (ch. 73), *liǎn dōu hǔ huáng le* 臉都唬黃了 'their faces turned yellow from fear' (ch. 82), *miàn rú tǔsè* 面如土色 'his/her face had the colour of the earth' (ch. 85, 93, 105). In this case, the term yellow probably indicates paleness, and fear is also associated with the loss of face colour: *hǔ de miàn shàng shī sè* 唬得面上失色 'so scared that his face lost colour' (ch. 102).

The colour white, however, is only associated with anger, not with fear: *qì de liǎn bái qì yē* 氣的臉白氣噎 'so angry that her face turned white and her breath began choking' (ch. 55), *qì bái le liǎn* 氣白了臉 'got so angry their faces turned white' (ch. 71).

The colour green may be associated with anger: *qì de yǎn hóng miàn qīng* 氣的眼紅面青 'so angry that her eyes turned red and her face green' (ch. 60 [only Royal Household edition 王府本 and 1784 edition 甲辰本]). Intense grief is once described as resulting in a green-yellow (*qīnghuáng* 青黃 ch. 97) face colour. In these and some other cases, however, it is not clear to what extent the colour term is meant to be descriptive of an actual change of face colour occurring. Colour terms may also be hyperbolic expressions used to describe emotional intensity, as in the English expression *green with envy*.

2. Eye colour

The colour of the eyes is also considered to be expressive. As in the case of words seemingly referring to face colour, however, the term literally referring to eye colour, *yǎnsè(r)* 眼色(兒), has little or nothing to do with actual changes in eye colour. It refers instead to hints of

intended meaning usually communicated through eye movements. The expressions *shǐ yǎnsè(r)* 使眼色(兒) (lit. 'send eye colour' (ch. 4, 6, 21, 22, 24 etc.), *dì yǎnsè* 遞眼色 (lit. 'pass eye colour' ch. 6, 40) and *jiāng yǎnsè yì diū* 將眼色一丟 (lit. 'throw eye colour' ch. 33 [only 1784 edition 甲辰本 and 1791 edition 程甲本]) all refer to eye movements that give hints concerning matters that cannot, usually for social reasons, be expressed in language. The idiom *kàn yǎnsè* 看眼色 (lit. 'look at eye colour' ch. 43, 80) refers to the attempt to interpret such hints.[26]

As for real changes in eye colour, the most commonly occurring change is a reddening of the eyes. This most often happens when tears are shed or when one is on the verge of shedding tears. In most cases, only the rim of the eyes is mentioned (*yǎnquānr hóng le* 眼圈兒紅了 ch. 11, *yǎnjīngquānr hóng le* 眼睛圈兒紅了 ch. 23), but there are also many cases in which the eyes as such are referred to (*yǎnjīng hóng le* 眼睛紅了 ch. 26, *kū de yǎn hóng* 哭得眼紅 'cried so that her eyes turned red' ch. 107), and in one case it is the upper eyelid that turns red and swollen (*yǎnpāo hóngzhǒng* 眼泡紅腫 ch. 116). Swollenness commonly occurs along with this tearful redness of the eyes (*yǎn hónghóng de zhǒng le* 眼紅紅的腫了 'her eyes were so red that they got swollen' ch. 69), and it also often occurs on its own (*yǎnjīng zhǒng zhe* 眼睛腫著 ch. 44) or along with a reddening of the cheeks (*yǎn zhǒng sāi hóng* 眼腫腮紅 ch. 119), though for some reason never with the reddening of the rim of the eyes. Sometimes the cheeks or the face as a whole turn red along with the rim of the eyes (*yǎnquān wēi hóng, shuāng sāi dài chì* 眼圈微紅，雙腮帶赤 'the rim of the eyes slightly red, and the two cheeks a little red' ch. 34; *bǎ liǎn què yì hǒng, yǎnquānr yě hóng le* 把臉卻一紅，眼圈兒也紅了 'his face turned red, and the rim of his eyes also turned red' ch. 68).

In a couple of cases, red eyes do not signify tearfulness, but rather anger, as in the situation where Jia Zheng almost has his son beaten to death: *yǎn dōu hóngzǐ le* 眼都紅紫了 'his eyes turned a reddish purple' (ch. 33). This may also lie behind the expression *yǎn nèi chū huǒ* 眼內出火 lit. 'fire came out from within his eyes' (ch. 57).

[26] The word *yǎnsè* 眼色 is also used in another more abstract meaning in the expression *méi yǎnsè* 沒眼色 'fail to show an understanding of how one should behave' (ch. 40, 55, 66, 68), which has nothing to do with concrete facial expressions.

EMISSION OF FLUIDS

The definitely most common form of facial fluid described in *The Story of the Stone* comes from the eyes: the shedding of tears. According to the author of the early 20th century novel *Travels of Lao Can* 《老殘遊記》, Liu E, "Cao Xueqin projected his tears into *The Red Chamber Dream*" (曹雪芹寄哭泣於「紅樓夢」, preface), and the descriptions of tears are indeed numerous. Sometimes tears appear along with snivel running from the nose: *yǎnlèi bítì kū chūlái* 眼淚鼻涕哭出來 'cried out with both tears and snivel' (ch. 55).

The only other form of facial fluid described is sweat: *jí de yì liǎn hàn* 急的一臉汗 'so distressed that your face is filled with sweat' (ch. 32). Apart from tears, therefore, emission of fluids is not a common signal of emotions.

While there are quite a few descriptions of people spitting both at each other and elsewhere to express contempt, this can hardly be classified as emission of fluid, since the saliva is already there, and the emotional response lies in the muscular activity bringing it out of the mouth.

MUSCULAR ACTIVITY

Muscular activity may occur almost instinctively, with no communicative intention (like spontaneous laughter or like the dumbstruck expression often accompanying fear), or it may be actively used to express one's feelings (like the glances sent back and forth between two persons who like or love each other). Even the most instinctive expressions, however, are usually easier to control than changes in face colour or emission of fluids.

1. Laughing and smiling

If there is much shedding of tears in *The Story of the Stone*, there is even more laughing and smiling. The character *xiào* 笑 'laugh; smile' occurs 3750 times in the novel, in average more than 30 times per chapter! Sometimes its occurrence seems quite unmotivated, especially in many of the 2234 instances of the phrase 笑道 'said with a smile' (and numerous instances of constructions like *xiào shuō (dào)* 笑說(道) 'said with a smile', *xiào wèn (dào)* 笑問(道) 'asked with a smile', *xiào*

dá dào 笑答道 'answered with a smile', *xiào huí dào* 笑回道 'reported with a smile', *xiào rǎng dào* 笑嚷道 'shouted with a smile', *xiào quàn dào* 笑勸道 'implored with a smile', and *xiào mìng* 笑命 'ordered with a smile'). Some of these seemingly unmotivated smiles and laughs may be due to politeness or attempts to avoid unpleasant feelings. Still, the question remains why so many of the novel's utterances are accompanied by smiles.

One possible explanation is that all the exaggerated smiling is included by the author(s) in order to create a superficial gaiety beneath which the sad and tragic events of *The Story of the Stone* unfold. If this interpretation is correct, the frequent smiling has to do with the theme of reality and falsehood that runs through the novel, in much the same way as the focus on beauty discussed above. Throughout the novel, the author consciously creates a superficial world of gaiety that he knows to be false, perhaps in order to expose the hollowness of man's attachment to the pursuit of happiness. Lu Xun (1992:212) notes that in the novel, "a mist of sadness covers all the flowers and trees, but only Baoyu inhales and perceives it" (悲涼之霧，遍被華林，然呼吸而領會之者，獨寶玉而已).[27] All the smiling may be seen as an outward expression of a resistance against taking in the sadness that permeates life. One interesting example of interplay between sighs and smiles occurs in chapter 78, just after Baoyu's maid Qingwen has died:

(24) 秋紋見這條紅褲是晴雯手內針線，因嘆道：「這條褲子以後收了罷，真是物件在人去了。」麝月忙也笑道：「這是晴雯的針線。」又嘆道：「真真物在人亡了！」秋紋將麝月拉了一把，笑道：「這褲子配著松花色襖兒、石青靴子，越顯出這靛青的頭，雪白的臉來了。」

'Qiuwen recognised the red trousers [that Baoyu was wearing] as Qingwen's handiwork and said *with a sigh*: "We should keep those trousers. As the saying goes, 'the objects remain, but the person is gone'." Sheyue said quickly *with a smile*: "That is Qingwen's handiwork." And added *with a sigh*: "Truly 'the objects remain, but the person is gone'." Qiuwen nudged Sheyue and said *with a*

[27] Lu 1992 p. 212.

smile: "Those trousers, along with the green jacket and the blue boots, make his [i.e. Baoyu's] black hair and snow-white complexion look even better.'" (italics mine)

After each sigh follows a smile, in one instance quickly, in another instance along with a nudge that Hawkes' translation makes almost overly explicit: "Musk [i.e. Qiuwen] nudged her reprovingly and tried to change the subject." In this specific case, it is quite clear that the smiles appear in order to fight off the sadness implied by the sighs. It is less obvious, but still possible, that a vast number of the thousands of smiles in the novel have a similar function.

The novel contains all sorts of laughing and smiling, from the polite smile (*péixiào* 陪笑, 83 instances) to the roaring laughter (*dàxiào* 大笑, 31 instances). They may express a wide range of emotions, from different degrees and variants of happiness to cold cynicism (the term *lěngxiào* 冷笑 'sneer; laugh scornfully' occurs 113 times!).

All kinds of smiling and laughter involve muscular activity around the mouth. The mouth itself, however, is seldom mentioned, except in general descriptions such as *kǒu nèi xiào dào* 口內笑道 (ch. 21, 57) or *kǒu nèi xiào shuō* 口內笑說 (ch. 54, 57, 60) 'said with his/her mouth smiling/laughing', *kǒu nèi xiào mà* 口內笑罵 'cursed with a laugh from her mouth' (ch. 38). The only expression that refers to a specific type of muscular activity around the mouth is *mǐn (zhe) zuǐ(r) xiào* 抿(著)嘴(兒)笑 'to smile with one's lips closed together' (18 instances). This way of smiling is considered a virtue of young women, since it does not expose the teeth.

To the extent that any part of the face is involved in descriptions of laughter, it is more commonly the eyes and the brows (*méi kāi yǎn xiào* 眉開眼笑 'with open brows and laughing eyes; beam with joy' ch. 6, 37, 43, 49, 117, 119), the cheeks (*sāi shàng sì xiào bú xiào* 腮上似笑不笑 'with his cheeks seemingly smiling but not really smiling' ch. 23) or the face as a whole (*mǎn liǎn shì xiào* 滿臉是笑 'smiles all over his face' ch. 24, *xiàoróng mǎn miàn* 笑容滿面 'smiles all over his face' ch. 84, 85, *yǎng miàn dà xiào* 仰面大笑 'raised his head in roaring

laughter' ch. 119). Scornful laughter often passes through the nose (sometimes referred to as the nostrils) rather than the mouth:

bízi lǐ xiào le yì shēng 鼻子裡笑了一聲 'laughed through the nose' (ch. 25)
bízi lǐ xiào yi xiào 鼻子裡笑一笑 'laughed through the nose' (ch. 25)
bíkǒng lǐ chī le liǎng shēng 鼻孔裡嗤了兩聲 'sneered a couple of times through the nostrils' (ch. 80)
zài bíziyǎn lǐ xiào le yì shēng 在鼻子眼裡笑了一聲 'laughed through the nostrils' (ch. 82)

The Story of the Stone makes no explicit distinction between the smile (which is primarily a visual phenomenon) and laughter (which is primarily auditive, though most often also including visual features similar to those of the smile). The Chinese term *xiào* 笑 is neutral with respect to this distinction, and it is often difficult to know whether the characters of the novel are laughing or smiling.

2. Staring and glaring

The single most expressive part of the face is the eyes. The *Complete Compendium* (preface, p. 6) says:

If you want to know what goes on in someone's mind [heart],
you only need to look at the clarity of the expression of his eyes.
The eyes are the doors of the mind [heart].

要知心裡事，但看眼神清。眼乃心之門戶。

The range of emotions that *The Story of the Stone* explicitly associates with the eyes, however, are surprisingly few. The vast majority of cases concerns either anger or fear.

The most common expression for both anger and fear is described as *dèng* 瞪 'to open one's eyes wide; stare; glare'. One may be "so frightened that one's eyes go wide open" (唬得兩眼直瞪 ch. 117) or "so angry

that one's eyes go wide open" (氣的眼睛直瞪瞪的 ch. 111). In the case of anger, the staring or glaring may be transitive, as when one stares at somebody from hatred (恨的瞪著他們 ch. 77). The eyes may be so wide open that their white parts become unusually prominent, one looks at somebody "with the white of the eye" (白瞪兩眼 ch. 119). In one case, wide-open eyes (combined with an open mouth) do not express fear or anger, but sexual arousal and erotic anticipation, as when Xue Pan is riding a horse, looking for what he wrongly believes to be his homosexual partner (張著嘴瞪著眼 ch. 47).

Quite often the staring or glaring occurs along with other facial expressions, most commonly with the dumbstruck, stiff or wooden expression referred to as *dāi* 呆. The common expression *mù dèng kǒu dāi* 目瞪口呆 'eyes staring and mouth gaping' occurs three times (ch. 1, 33, 94), all signifying fear, while the variant *mù dèng kǒu wāi* 'eyes staring and mouth askance' 目瞪口歪 occurs once (ch. 33), signifying anger. It is not entirely clear which emotional reaction leads Jia Baoyu to be "dumbstruck for quite some time, his eyes staring [emptily]" (瞪著眼呆了半晌 ch. 91).

While the term *dèng* 瞪 always seems to have some emotional content, the term *zhēng* 睜 'open one's eyes' is more descriptive, but may also be used to signify strong anger, as when Qingwen's phoenix eyes go wide [lit. round] open (鳳眼圓睜 ch. 52). The verb *shù* 豎, lit. 'to erect' may be used about scared eyes (兩眼直豎 ch. 105, 雙眼直豎 ch. 111), while the verb *lì* 立, lit. 'to raise; to erect', is used to signify anger (立起兩個騷眼睛來罵人 ch. 74). The expression *chēn mù* 瞋目 means 'to stare angrily' (ch. 7).

The expression *shǐ yǎnsè* 使眼色 'give hints with the eyes' has already been discussed above. The term *chǒu yì yǎn* 瞅一眼 'cast a glance at' is used twice (ch. 22, 62) to indicate slight reproach after a person has said something that had better been left unsaid.

Not looking straight at somebody may be an expression of disrespect or even anger, as in the idiom *zhèngyǎn yě bú kàn* 正眼也不看 (ch. 24, 25, 27, 35, and - with *qiáo* 瞧 instead of *kàn* 看 - 67) or *bù ná zhèngyǎn qiáo* 不拿正眼瞧 (ch. 117). Similar emotions may be expressed by the idiom *yǎnpír yě bù tái* 眼皮兒也不抬 'not even lift one's eyelids' (ch.

91). Note, however, that not *daring* to look straight at somebody expresses an extreme degree of respect, the feeling that one is not worthy of looking straight at something or someone, as when Jia Yun enters Jia Baoyu's quarters (連正眼也不敢看 ch. 26). To look at somebody with a sideglance (*cè mù ér shì* 側目而視 ch. 2) expresses a combination of fear and hate, though in this case real glances may not be involved at all, since the expression is mostly used metaphorically.

Half-closed eyes usually indicates sleepiness or drunkenness, but sometimes also erotic arousal, as with *xíng le yǎn* 餳了眼 in chapter 12 and *miēxie zhe yǎn* 乜斜著眼 in chapter 47.

3. Frowning

In Chinese literature, the brows are conceived as almost as expressive as the eyes, and the two are often mentioned together. The most common expression involves frowning or knitting one's brows: *zhòu méi* 皺眉 or *cù méi* 蹙眉. These two idioms seem to refer to one and the same physical reaction, but the emotional content is not always the same. Both may express, and usually do express, worry. In addition, however, *zhòu méi* 皺眉 may express dislike or disgust, as when Grandmother Jia is presented with dumplings with crab stuffing in chapter 41. The idiom *cù méi* 蹙眉, on the other hand, may express strong anger, as when Qingwen is filled with rage over Zhui'er's theft of a bracelet in chapter 52. Another idiom, *lì méi* 立眉 'raise one's brows', expresses anger, as in the expression *lì méi chēn mù* 立眉瞋目 'raise one's eyes and stare angrily' (ch. 7).

People who like or love each other may send expressive glances at each other, involving both the eyes and the brows: *méi lái yǎn qù* 眉來眼去 lit. 'brows come eyes go' (ch. 69, 72) and *jǐ méi nòng yǎn* 擠眉弄眼 'squeeze brows and play with eyes' (ch. 9 twice, with the variants *nòng méi jǐ yǎn* 弄眉擠眼, *jǐ yǎn nòng méi* 擠眼弄眉, and *jǐ bí nòng méi* 擠鼻弄眉, see above).

4. Pouting one's lips

The mouth is also an expressive part of the face. I have already mentioned how Xue Pan's erotic arousal and eager anticipation makes him open

his mouth while staring around (張著嘴，瞪著眼 ch. 47). Persons who want to express scorn or disapproval may protrude their lower lip while the corners of their mouth point downwards (*piě* 撇, as in 嘴唇一撇 ch. 80, 把嘴一撇 ch. 91). In face of a false accusation a servant is said to pout his lips (*juē le zuǐ* 撅了嘴 ch. 19).

Pouting one's lips as a signal (*nǔ zuǐ(r)* 努嘴(兒), also written 呶嘴兒 and in some editions 弩嘴) may be done as a way of pointing the direction, usually combined with the coverbs *wàng* 往 or *xiàng* 向:

wàng wū lǐ nǔ zuǐr 往屋裡努嘴兒 'pointing her lips towards the room' (ch. 89)
xiàng nèi nǔ zuǐr 向內努嘴兒 'pointing inside with her lips' (ch. 7)

In such cases, westerners would usually use the index finger, or, less often, the eyes. Other instances of *nǔ* 努 used to point out the direction are found in chapters 8, 36, 67, and 109.

Pouting one's lips may also, however, be used as a signal that there is something going on in the situation that the recipient of the signal may not be aware of. In most cases, the signal implies a request to stop from saying or doing something. In chapter 96, Lin Daiyu enters Jia Baoyu's quarters and asks if he is home. Baoyu's maid Xiren is about to answer when Daiyu's maid Zijuan (standing behind Daiyu) pouts her mouth in Xiren's direction (和他努嘴兒), points her finger at Daiyu and waves her hand. Although Xiren does not understand what is going on, she understands enough to refrain from answering. Other instances of *nǔ* 努 used to indicate that something more is going on are found in chapters 64, 82, 96, and 109 (written 呶).

5. Sticking one's tongue out

Within the mouth, the tongue may be stuck out as an expressive gesture. The verb *tǔ* 吐 is used to refer to such a gesture when it expresses astonishment or fear (ch. 33 [some editions only], 41, 82, 102, 104). The verb *shēn* 伸 is used to refer to more or less the same gesture when it expresses a feeling of relief at having been able to escape an awkward or awful situation (ch. 23, 30, 55 twice). The verb *tǔ* 吐 mostly goes

with the literary noun *shé* 舌 'tongue', while the verb *shēn* 伸 mostly goes with the colloquial noun *shétou* 舌頭 'tongue'. But there is also one instance of *tǔ le shétour* 吐了舌頭兒 (ch. 82) and one instance of *shēn shé* 伸舌 (ch. 55). I am not sure if there is any difference in the actual gesture referred to by the two verbs.

6. Grinding and gnashing one's teeth

The teeth may be brought together in a close, locked position. To what extent this gesture actually has an expressive function depends on whether or not it is visible to outsiders.

There are two collocations referring to this gesture, *yǎo yá* 咬牙 and *qiè chǐ* 切齒. Sometimes they occur together, sometimes on their own. Again, I do not know if there is any difference in the actual gesture referred to by the two expressions, but they do differ in their emotional content. The expression *qiè chǐ* 切齒 (ch. 97), including the collocation *yǎo yá qiè chǐ* 咬牙切齒 (ch. 57, 99, 103), is always used in connection with a strong sense of hatred, as for instance when Lin Daiyu and her maids believe Jia Baoyu to have willingly gone off to marry Xue Baochai and left Daiyu to die on her own (ch. 97, 99).

The expression *yǎo yá* 咬牙, on the other hand, may be used in connection with less severe angry reactions, as when Jia Lian's concubine Ping'er scolds him, not without a tint of playfulness, for having cheated her (ch. 21). In addition, *yǎo yá* 咬牙 may be used to indicate strong determination, either in connection with attempts to endure pain (ch. 34), refusal to do something (咬定牙不依 ch. 12, 咬定牙不願意 ch. 46, 咬定牙斷乎不肯 ch. 74), or single-minded anger (as when Jian Zheng almost beats his son to death ch. 33).

Biting one's lips (*yǎo zhe zuǐchún* 咬著嘴唇 ch. 25) indicates a feeling of being wrongly accused, while biting one's tongue (*yǎo shé* 咬舌 ch. 33) indicates fear.

7. Turning one's face

The face as a whole may be turned in different directions by simple muscular activity in the neck. In one passage, Jia Baoyu turns his head upwards while laughing loudly (仰面大笑 ch. 119). In another passage,

a powerful mandarin turns his head upwards to show that he is not interested in ordinary conversation (仰著臉不大理人 ch. 105). When a diviner lets his beard point upwards (撅著鬍子 ch. 102) after having pronounced his divination, this probably also has to do with an upward movement of the head, maybe as a sign of self-content. Turning one's head away (把臉一扭 ch. 31, 扭過臉 (ch. 68 [only some editions], 掉背臉 ch. 85) usually expresses some kind of rejection or disbelief. Lowering one's head (and, in most cases, not saying a word) may indicate reflection (低頭尋思 ch. 101), embarrassment (紅了臉，低了頭 ch. 46), tearfulness (滴下淚來，低頭不語 ch. 28), or fear (唬的骨軟筋酥，忙低頭站住 ch. 33).

8. Covering one's face

The kinds of muscular activity discussed so far affect only one part of the body or a pair of body parts such as the upper and the lower eyelids. But there is also muscular activity that affects two different body parts, one of which is the face or a part of the face, while the other is usually one or both hands. For instance, stroking one's face (*mǒ zhe liǎn* 抹著臉 ch. 104 [only some editions]) seems to signify reflection, as does stroking one's cheeks (*mō zhe sāi* 摸著腮 ch. 30, supporting one's cheeks with the hands (*tuō zhe sāi(jiá)* 托著腮(頰) ch. 57, 81), pinching one's beard (*niǎn xū* 拈鬚 ch. 17 three times, 105) and twisting one's beard (*niǔ xū* 扭鬚 ch. 120).

Covering one's face (with the hands, the sleeves or a handkerchief) may be expressed using four different idioms:

gài liǎn 蓋臉 (ch. 19, 46, 47, 80)
wò liǎn 握臉 (ch. 52 twice, 74)
zhē liǎn 遮臉 (ch. 25, 26)
yǎn miàn 掩面 (ch. 3, 5, 6, 30, 35)

There seems to be a tendency that the classical phrase *yǎn miàn* 掩面 is used when the emphasis is on laughter or especially crying (with or without embarrassment), whereas the colloquial phrases *gài liǎn* 蓋臉, *wò liǎn* 握臉, and *zhē liǎn* 遮臉 are used to indicate embarrassment

(sometimes accompanied by tears and anger). In this latter case, the main point by covering one's face is to hide one's embarrassment. Furthermore, *gài liǎn* 蓋臉 can be used metaphorically, and the phrase *jiǔ gài zhù le liǎn* 酒蓋住了臉 lit. 'the wine covered the face' (ch. 47, cf. also ch. 80) is not to be interpreted literally, but means something like 'his drunkenness made him shameless'.

9. Covering one's mouth

Covering one's mouth (usually with the hands) may be expressed using two different idioms:

wò zuǐ 握嘴 (ch. 31 [some editions have *yǎn zuǐ* 掩嘴], 36, 97)
yǎn kǒu 掩口 (ch. 12, 32, 36 twice, 57)

The colloquial phrase *wò zuǐ* 握嘴 is only used in cases where a person wants to suppress her own laughter, while the classical phrase *yǎn kǒu* 掩口 is used in cases where a person suddenly stops saying what he or she is about to say, in only one case involving laughter. Again, it is unclear whether there is any difference in the actual gestures involved.

UNSPECIFIED FACIAL SIGNALS

In many cases, however, only the emotion lying behind the facial expression is made explicit, not the actual expression. This has already been mentioned in the discussion of *sè* 色 lit. 'colour' above. Many terms with *róng* 容 'face' are of this type: *héróng* 和容 'with a calm and harmonious expression' (ch. 68), *nùróng* 怒容 'with an angry expression' (ch. 119). In such cases, the only information given about facial signals lies in the simple fact that the emotion referred to can be read on the person's face. This is done even more explicitly in expressions containing the words *miàn* 面 and *liǎn* 臉 'face':

jiāochēn mǎn miàn 嬌嗔滿面 'flirtish grumbling covering her face' (ch. 21)
mǎn liǎn nùsè 滿臉怒色 'with an angry expression all over the face' (ch. 35)

yì liǎn nùsè 一臉怒色 'with an angry expression all over the face' (ch. 77)
miàn shàng jiē yǒu déyì zhī zhuàng 面上皆有得意之狀 'all of them had a pleased expression on their faces' (ch. 16)
liǎn shàng xiūcán 臉上羞慚 'with an embarrassed expression' (ch. 107)
liǎn jí 臉急 'with a distressed expression' (ch. 99 twice)

Sometimes the location of the facial signal is specified further, as with the grief and worry expressed through the brows (*chóu méi* 愁眉 'worried brows' ch. 27, 57, 62, 63) or the happiness or anger showing on the cheeks (*xǐqì yíng sāi* 喜氣盈腮 'happy expression filling the cheeks' ch. 16; *wēi sāi dài nù* 微腮帶怒 'the small cheeks carrying anger' ch. 23).

The Expressive Face

To sum up, *The Story of the Stone* has a lot to tell us about the pre-modern Chinese way of perceiving the face and its expressive aspects.

First, the novel makes it clear beyond doubt that the various parts of the face are construed as belonging to three basic categories: the face proper, organs located in the face, and hair located in the face.

Second, the novel indicates that the connection between appearance on the one hand and personality and fate on the other has some validity, but certainly cannot be trusted. With regard to fate, Lin Daiyu's frowning brows correctly anticipate her early death, while the willow-leaf brows of Wang Xifeng seem to promise a success that her early death belies. With regard to personality, Jia Baoyu's limpid eyes and Lin Daiyu's frowning brows and passionate eyes are expressive of their emotional and unconventional characters, and the stunning beauty of most of the young characters is expressive of their powerful characters. In some cases, however, the connection between appearance and personality is explicitly denied, most notably in the case of the cruel, but pretty woman Xia Jingui.

Third, the novel makes full use of the fact that facial expression reflects emotions. Although *The Story of the Stone* is considered to be richer in psychological description than most traditional Chinese novels,

the authors only seldom relate directly what goes on in the minds of the characters. Most of the time, they refer to mental processes primarily by describing their facial (and sometimes bodily) reflections.[28]

PAIRED TERMS

One problem left for further discussion is the pairing of terms that refer to more or less the same muscular activity, but which are associated with different emotions:

1. Knitting one's brows:

zhòu méi 皺眉	- worry; disgust
cù méi 蹙眉	- worry; anger

2. Sticking one's tongue out:

shēn shétou 伸舌頭	- relief
tǔ shé 吐舌	- astonishment; fear

3. Pressing one's teeth together:

yǎo yá 咬牙	- strong determination; anger
qiè chǐ 切齒	- hatred

4. Covering one's face:

gài liǎn 蓋臉, *wò liǎn* 握臉, *zhē liǎn* 遮臉	- embarrassment
yǎn miàn 掩面	- laughing or crying

5. Covering one's mouth:

wò zuǐ 握嘴	- suppression of laughter
yǎn kǒu 掩口	- discontinuation of speech

[28] Cf. Wang Meng (1990:36) on "description of mental traces" (心理跡象描寫).

One of the distinctions to be noted here regards style. The first term in each pair is more colloquial than the second. In the first pair, the verb *zhòu* 皱 is colloquial, while the verb *cù* 蹙 is literary. In the second pair, the verb *shēn* 伸 is mostly followed by the colloquial form *shétou* 舌頭, while *tǔ* 吐 is mostly followed by the literary form *shé* 舌. In the third pair, *yǎo yá* 咬牙 is a live verb-object construction (cf. *yǎo dìng yá* 咬定牙 ch. 12, 46, 74, *yǎo zhe yá* 咬著牙 ch. 30, 33, 34, 97), while *qiè chǐ* 切齒 is a fixed and indivisible literary expression. The same distinction holds for *gài liǎn* 蓋臉 (cf. *gài zhù le liǎn* 蓋住了臉 ch. 46), *wò liǎn* 握臉 (cf. *wò qǐ liǎn* 握起臉 ch. 52 twice) and *zhē liǎn* (cf. *bǎ liǎn zhē zhe* 把臉遮著 ch. 25, *zhē le liǎn* 遮了臉 ch. 26) vs. *yǎn miàn* 掩面 (indivisible). In the fifth pair, the main distinction lies in the status of *zuǐ* 嘴, which is highly colloquial, vs. *kǒu* 口, which is more literary.

One possibility is that the literary expressions have survived from an earlier language stage along with the specific emotional connotations commonly attached to them at that stage, while the colloquial expressions have been added later to refer to the same gestures when they signal other emotions. If this is true, both terms in each pair refer to the same gesture.

It may also be that our corpus is too small to draw valid conclusions about such fine distinctions. If our corpus were larger, maybe the pattern would turn out to be less clear.

The possibility remains, however, that the terms within each pair refer not only to different emotions, but also to slightly different gestures.

COMPARATIVE ASPECTS

To what extent are the expressive aspects of facial features universal, and to what extent are they determined by the culture in which they occur? Are Chinese faces expressive in the same way as Western faces? This topic has been touched upon, but not discussed in a systematic way. Tentatively, I would like to suggest the following differences between traditional China, as seen through *The Story of the Stone*, and modern Western culture as known today:

1. The tripartite distinction of the face into the face proper, organs in the face and hair in the face probably makes sense both to westerners and Chinese. From a Western point of view, however, the distinction may seem arbitrary, while in traditional Chinese culture it is clearly

alive as one of the bases for the parallellism frequently found in descriptions of appearance and facial expressions.

2. Everyday Chinese has a term for the vertical cleft running from the nose to the upper lip (*rénzhōng* 人中), while everyday English does not and has to resort to the academic term *philtrum.*

3. Chinese culture seems to be more concerned with eyebrows than Western culture. The brows are important in descriptions of appearance as well as facial expressions, and they are highly expressive. One reason for this difference may be that modern Western culture is, to a large extent, shaped by people with blonde hair and therefore less visible eyebrows than what is usual among Chinese.

4. The eyelashes, however, are not mentioned at all in *The Story of the Stone.* While there are certainly many Western novels that do not mention eyelashes either, this is quite remarkable when compared with the detailed attention *The Story of the Stone* gives to other aspects of the area within and around the eyes. Again, the explanation is probably racial, since the eyelashes of the Mongoloid race tend to be shorter than those of the Caucasian race, and they are often hidden behind heavy eyelids.

5. The choice of beauty as an almost exclusive focus of description, while by no means unknown in the West, is a typical Chinese feature. This sometimes leaves Western readers with the impression that even the best of Chinese literature balances a little too heavily in the direction of kitsch.

6. On the other hand, the ugly sage is also a Chinese rather than a Western character, though he has much in common with the clown as well as the blind man with a deeper vision often found in Western drama.

7. As far as I can tell, the extremely formalised nature of descriptions of appearance (and, to a much lesser extent, of facial expressions) is completely alien to Western literature. Western languages do not have an entity similar to the Chinese four-character expression. Nor

do they have the approximate correspondence between morpheme and syllable that lies at the bottom of Chinese syllable-by-syllable parallellism. More importantly, however, Western descriptions of appearance and facial expressions simply tend to be more realistic and less susceptible to the stylised rigour often met with in Chinese literature. As we have seen, even a so-called realistic novel like *The Story of the Stone* hardly ever finds occasion to describe persons whose appearance is below average. In this respect, the point is not to be realistic, but to celebrate the beauty of whatever is (or once was) beautiful. Descriptions of appearance are almost like poems written on the occasion of such celebrations. Hence the rigourous formal requirements.

8. The ideals of beauty exposed by *The Story of the Stone* may not have been representative of mid-18th century Chinese society as a whole. Modern Western ideals of beauty also differ a lot from country to country, from generation to generation, and from one group or even individual to another. It does make sense, however, to ask to which extent we can recognise some of the ideals presented by the novel in modern Western culture at all. For instance, it is hard to find a modern Western ideal corresponding to the notion that the most beautiful face a young boy can have is one that is as round as the mid-autumn moon. The pinkness or whiteness of what were considered to be beautiful faces might easily be seen as unhealthy paleness by modern westerners accustomed to beach holidays and sun-tan, though in this case the Chinese ideals are quite close to those of 19th-century Europe. The femininity of Jia Baoyu and many other male characters (with strongly red lips and wet, emotional eyes) may seem repulsive to many modern westerners, though hardly more so than Michael Jackson, who has certainly also been admired by many. And while Lin Daiyu's sickly appearance clearly appeals less to modern westerners than to 18th- and 19th-century Chinese, some of the less healthy and more desperate idols of the rock world may be at least remotely related to her, as may the ultra-thin model Twiggy from the 1960s.

9. Charles Darwin was certainly right that changes of face colour tend to be universal, since they are too instinctive to be learned. The red

face colour associated with embarrassment, for instance, is common to *The Story of the Stone* and modern Western culture. Cultural concepts relating to these changes, however, may differ. While blushing is often described as turning "red and swollen" (*hóngzhàng* 紅漲) or even "violet and swollen" (*zǐzhàng* 紫漲) by Chinese, the swollenness is mostly overlooked by westerners. It is also interesting to note that both Chinese and Western culture may perceive an angry face as "red" (*hóng* 紅), "white" (*bái* 白) and "green" (*qīng* 青). The association between greenness and anger is not strong in either culture and is undoubtedly hyperbolic rather than descriptive. The colour most often associated with anger in *The Story of the Stone*, however, is "yellow" (*huáng* 黃), which is probably based on the colour of the skin of the Mongoloid race and never seems to be associated with anger in the West.

10. The basic instinctive reactions associated with smiling and laughter are probably more or less the same across cultures. Learning to smile and laugh properly, however, is also a cultural process, resulting in certain variations from one culture to another. To modern westerners, smiling with one's lips pressed together (*mǐn zuǐ* 抿嘴) looks forced and unnatural, while in traditional China this was the ideal, at least for young women, who were not supposed to expose their teeth. The enormous amount of polite smiles found in *The Story of the Stone* also reflects a cultural difference, and one that still exists, as many Western accounts of the "smiling Chinese" may bear witness to. In addition to such differences in actual behaviour, there is also a difference in perception. Westerners tend to see smiling and laughter as two different (though related) phenomena and have no common term for the two, while both traditional and modern Chinese tend to see them as variations of the same activity and do not have this terminological dichotomy at all.

11. There are a number of other differences between Chinese and Western facial expressions. Westerners consider it childish to protrude the lower lip while the corners of the mouth point downwards (*piě zuǐ* 撇嘴) to express scorn or discontent. Pouting the lips (*nǔ zuǐ* 努嘴) to point the way is hardly seen in the West. Sticking the tongue out (*tǔ shé* 吐舌) to express astonishment or fear is highly uncommon,

though sticking the tongue out to express relief (*shēn shétou* 伸舌頭) seems a bit less alien. Finally, covering one's face to hide one's embarrassment seems much more common in Chinese culture than in Western culture.

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